

Resolution Supporting a Phase Out of Atlantic Salmon in the Salish Sea

WHEREAS on August 19, 2017 an aquaculture operation managed by Cooke Inc. off the coast of Cypress Island in Skagit County, WA containing 305,000 farmed Atlantic Salmon failed and released tens of thousands of fish into the Salish Sea.

WHEREAS the Lummi Nation declared a state of emergency on August 24, 2017, deployed an Emergency Response Team, and caught over 43,000 Atlantic Salmon.¹

WHEREAS state agencies, as directed by Governor Inslee on August 26, temporarily halted all permits for Atlantic Salmon net pens and urged the public to catch as many of the escaped Atlantic Salmon and report the locations of their capture.²

WHEREAS Cooke Inc. assured the public that the fish would not survive and native fish were not at risk.³

WHEREAS Atlantic Salmon were still being caught in the Skagit River on December 1, 2018 – three months after the failure.⁴

WHEREAS numerous studies show the impacts of Atlantic Salmon escapements in the marine and freshwater ecosystems, such as:

- Bisson 2006: Evidence of continual, unreported Atlantic escapes from the industry in Puget Sound.⁵
- Fisher 2014: Atlantic salmon prevalence and occupancy in Canadian Pacific rivers.⁶
- Morton 2017: Evidence of higher disease rates (PRV) in Atlantic salmon migrating through net pen waters.⁷
- Morton, Volpe 2002: Description of farmed salmon captures in 2002.⁸
- Naylor 2005: Overview risks of escaped farmed salmon.⁹
- Volpe 2000: Evidence of reproduction in BC rivers.¹⁰
- Volpe 2001: Competition study between juvenile Atlantics and natives, quote 'Recent evidence suggests that this species is now naturally reproducing in Vancouver Island rivers' and 'we suggest that Atlantic salmon may be capable of colonizing and persisting in coastal British Columbia river systems that are underutilized by native species, such as steelhead.'¹¹

¹ <http://www.islandsweekly.com/news/lummi-nation-fishers-capture-more-than-43500-atlantic-salmon/>

² <https://www.governor.wa.gov/news-media/statement-inslee-regarding-release-net-pen-raised-atlantic-salmon>

³ <https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/environment/oops-after-accidental-release-of-atlantic-salmon-fisherman-being-told-catch-as-many-as-you-want/>

⁴ <https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/environment/despite-agency-assurances-tribes-catch-more-escaped-atlantic-salmon-in-skagit-river/>

⁵ <https://drive.google.com/open?id=0B6gAzVijJ1QiWFJPS09vRVVGeHZLQUF3cmdMRVJIZy01YINZ>

⁶ <https://drive.google.com/open?id=0B6gAzVijJ1QiSnVoX1VuTmlHeE1kdmrWTIyYUN2SIVabFA4>

⁷ <https://drive.google.com/open?id=0B6gAzVijJ1QiczNnd3RtTTNpU18yVVFUkZ0bGx6SGp5dUJv>

⁸ <https://drive.google.com/open?id=0B6gAzVijJ1QiX3VHZI9iV2Q2X0s5M09hTjhlSkRZak1ZcHRZ>

⁹ <https://drive.google.com/open?id=0B6gAzVijJ1QiYwxtR2E3Z2pmTDMzSy1GamRxSk40SXIpdWNN>

¹⁰ <https://drive.google.com/open?id=0B6gAzVijJ1QiLXg3eVYxaW04cFloaWNGM2MxSIVoOXRCR1VV>

¹¹ <https://drive.google.com/open?id=0B6gAzVijJ1QieWZIUxIkQmhKa21NOHRSS0hJOWZReFZwV0hB>

WHEREAS Washington has a total of 7 active Atlantic Salmon operations in the Puget Sound & Salish Sea (formerly 8 with the Port Angeles net pen which was recently shut down by Department of Natural Resources for aquatic land lease violations).¹² British Columbia has about 70 operations -- both native and nonnative finfish aquaculture¹³ -- at least a dozen of which are Atlantic Salmon¹⁴ .

WHEREAS California and Alaska have banned Atlantic Salmon aquaculture operations in open marine waters and Oregon doesn't have any.

WHEREAS the Skagit County Democrats' platform makes the following values & policy statements regarding the environment:

- We believe it is imperative that every citizen of the United States practices energy conservation measures as we pursue alternative sources of energy to relieve our dependence on foreign oil.
- We further believe that protection of the environment is essential to maintaining a strong economy for the long term.
- We support programs that protect air and water quality;
- We support programs that support the preservation and restoration of wild salmon runs and habitat.
- We believe that we are stewards of our waters, forests, lands and other natural resources.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that we, the Skagit County Democrats, ask the Washington State Legislature to pass legislation before March 8, 2018 that accomplishes the following:

- Improve oversight, monitoring, and enforcement amongst the Washington state Departments of Natural Resources (DNR), Fish & Wildlife (DFW), and Ecology (DOE) for the remaining net pen operations in the Puget Sound until their aquatic land leases expire.
- Phase out existing nonnative fin fish aquaculture leases and prohibit their renewal.
- Direct the state to ban future non-native finfish aquaculture leases in open marine waters.

THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we, the Skagit County Democrats, ask the elected bodies of Skagit County and the cities/towns of Anacortes, Burlington, Concrete, Hamilton, Lyman Mount Vernon, and Sedro-Woolley to contact our 10th, 39th, and 40th Legislative District Senators and Representatives to urge them to pass legislation as outlined above.

Adopted at the Central Committee meeting on January 13, 2018

Skagit County Democratic Party Secretary _____

¹² <https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/environment/fish-farm-has-60-days-to-fix-net-pens-outside-seattle-as-1-million-atlantic-salmon-move-in/>

¹³ http://marineharvest.ca/globalassets/canada/pdf/sf-reference-doc/salmon-farming-in-british-columbia_updated-may-2017_marine-harvest-canada.pdf

¹⁴ <https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/environment/salmon-farming-operations-face-protests-occupations-in-b-c-legislative-scrutiny-in-washington-state/>