



Coastal Alliance for Aquaculture Reform

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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BC BUDGET CREATES BAD CLIMATE FOR WILD SALMON

Salmon farms continue to decimate wild salmon

Member groups of the Coastal Alliance for Aquaculture Reform (CAAR) voiced frustration today at the complete lack of support in the 2008 Budget for solving salmon farming threats to wild salmon in BC.

Despite intense scientific and public concern over the impacts to BC's wild salmon populations from salmon farms, the provincial government is failing to adopt a comprehensive commercial-scale closed containment strategy in today's budget.

"This government is ignoring the real and imminent threat that we are about to lose wild salmon runs to open net cage aquaculture," said Ruby Berry of the Georgia Strait Alliance. "Recent science leaves no doubt that the province must act quickly or be accountable for the demise of certain wild salmon stocks"

Scientific evidence of salmon farming's harmful effect on wild salmon mounts with each new published paper, and the findings are not surprising. "Countless processes have recommended action be taken to address the impacts of this industry but the BC government continues to dither while wild salmon runs head towards localized extinction," observed Catherine Stewart of Living Oceans Society.

CAAR provided the Province with a detailed proposal for Budget 2008, advocating the creation of a "Closed System Aquaculture Innovation and Development Fund" (CSAID). The \$10 million CSAID fund would seek matching investment from qualified entrepreneurs who demonstrate the ability to build and operate closed system salmon aquaculture projects. It would provide for transparent environmental and economic monitoring and analysis of these projects and assist successful projects in marketing the new technologies to British Columbia and other jurisdictions. The development of this technology would provide a logical path to a sustainable aquaculture industry that doesn't sacrifice wild salmon populations or coastal ecosystems.

Yet the Province continues to ignore the weight of scientific evidence, its own legislative committees and the pleas of businesses dependent on healthy wild salmon. "For the past two years, the government has been assuring us they want to be in the 'closed containment' aquaculture business as a step towards solving the problems associated with open-net cage salmon farming," said Jay Ritchlin of the David Suzuki Foundation. "If this budget is the measure of the government's commitment to serious action, it is tragically inadequate."

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