

For Immediate Release:  
Date December 8, 2010

## **Conservationists commend sockeye inquiry judge for ordering the release of salmon farm disease, sea lice and stocking data**

VANCOUVER — The Conservation Coalition — a participant group in the federal sockeye inquiry — applauds Justice Bruce Cohen's order instructing the salmon farming industry and the federal and provincial governments to release farming data from 120 farms, dating back 10 years.

The information requested includes disease, sea lice and stocking data that must be supplied to the Cohen Commission by January 21, 2011.

The Coalition commends Justice Cohen's decision as a significant step forward in conducting a comprehensive investigation into the industry's potential impacts on Fraser River sockeye. The Conservation Coalition is at the Cohen Commission arguing for the sustainable and long-term health of the Fraser river sockeye to benefit all British Columbians.

"We are pleased that Justice Cohen recognizes the importance of these data in the fulfillment of the Inquiry's mandate and is taking steps to hold to account this incredibly secretive industry," said Stan Proboszcz of Watershed Watch Salmon Society, a group member of the Coastal Alliance for Aquaculture Reform.

The salmon farming industry has vehemently resisted the release of these data — both historically and as participants in the Inquiry — while claiming that its operations do not have a negative impact on wild fish populations. Third-party researchers will now have the opportunity to begin investigating the legitimacy of these claims.

"It is irresponsible at best for the salmon farming industry to have withheld data on their operations in public waters," said Judah Harrison, Ecojustice staff lawyer. "Canadians have the right to know the full extent of the impacts salmon farming practices are having on the marine environment."

While the release of these data is unprecedented, the information is not exhaustive and the Conservation Coalition expects that additional information may be needed as the Inquiry proceeds. Specifically, sufficient historical data is required to establish trends in order for the Inquiry to fulfill its mandate in its entirety and a decade's worth of data instead of the 22 years requested may be insufficient.

A report on the data released today will likely be submitted to the Commission early next year.

For further information, please contact:

Judah Harrison, staff lawyer | Ecojustice  
604-685-5618 x232

Stan Proboszcz, fisheries biologist | Watershed Watch Salmon Society  
604-314-2713  
[proboszcz@watershed-watch.org](mailto:proboszcz@watershed-watch.org)

See the final ruling at the Cohen Commission's website below:

<http://www.cohencommission.ca/en/pdf/Rule19Application.pdf#zoom=100>

Conservation Coalition members: Watershed Watch Salmon Society, Coastal Alliance for Aquaculture Reform, Fraser River Keeper Society, Georgia Strait Alliance, Otto Langer, David Suzuki Foundation and Raincoast Conservation Foundation.