

Minister of
Fisheries and Oceans



Ministre des
Pêches et des Océans

Ottawa, Canada K1A 0E6

MAY 4 - 2009

Ms. Alexandra Morton
General Delivery
Port Hardy, British Columbia
V0N 2P0

Dear Ms. Morton.

Thank you for your correspondence of February 18, 2009, regarding aquaculture in British Columbia. I appreciated having the opportunity to meet with you while you were in Ottawa recently.

Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) supports the development of sustainable aquaculture within the context of conserving and rebuilding our wild Pacific salmon. The Department subjects all aquaculture operations to rigorous environmental standards under a number of statutes and regulations, including the *Fisheries Act* and the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act*, to ensure our marine ecosystems are not compromised.

DFO is fully considering the implications of Mr. Justice Hinkson's recent decision in *Alexandra Morton et al. v. the A.G. of British Columbia and Marine Harvest Canada*. The Province of British Columbia will continue in the role it has been assuming to this day in managing aquaculture within the province.

The Department shares your concerns about the declining abundances of pink salmon returning to the Broughton Archipelago over the last seven years. DFO monitors stock escapement which indicates that the number of pink salmon that returned to the Broughton area in 2008 was unusually low. A similar decline also occurred in many pink salmon stocks along the west coast of North America, including Alaska, indicating that the decline is the result of conditions experienced by pink salmon over an area much broader than the Broughton Archipelago. This suggests that the causes may not be associated with salmon farming in the Broughton area, but with much larger ecological events, including those associated with climate changes and changes in ocean productivity along our west coast. DFO is committed to evaluating the causes of stock fluctuations, including poor ocean survival.

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Following can be used as part of a management strategy to minimize the risk of wild salmon becoming infected by sea lice originating in salmon aquaculture farms. The Coordinated Area Management Plan (CAMP) proposal is an industry-led management strategy to protect wild salmon. CAMP is not currently a regulated management strategy for the area. Whether or not CAMP will achieve its objective remains to be seen, but it represents a significant and commendable effort by many people with very different concerns and interests, working towards this common goal.

I appreciate your suggestions about local salmon management. The Department is exploring options to increase the engagement of local communities in the Broughton Archipelago regarding salmon-related issues, in addition to advisory and consultation processes that are currently in place.

Thank you for taking the time to write to me. I trust this information has been helpful in addressing your concerns.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Gail Shea', written in a cursive style.

Gail Shea, P.C., M.P.