

# Open letter to the leaders of Canada's political parties from

## **GLOBAL SALMON FARMING RESISTANCE**

September 17, 2021

### **Time to protect wild salmon and our shared oceans by ending open net-pen salmon farming**

Dear Leaders,

We are an alliance of individuals, communities and organizations from countries all over the globe who have carefully studied the issues related to the farming of salmonids in open ocean net-pens. **We are fundamentally opposed to the practice**, for reasons of ecology, indigenous rights and title, local economy, human rights and community. We have come together to share our experience of this industry and to help one another to end it.

The global ocean is deeply connected, and wild salmon are one of many migratory species that act as a bridge between ecosystems and nations. We have a responsibility to work collaboratively across borders to ensure the maintenance of ocean health for future generations, and to secure a future for wild salmon populations. As leaders of Canada's major political parties, you have an opportunity to share in an international effort to protect marine ecosystems, wild salmon, capture fisheries and the health of communities from the risks of the open net-pen salmon farming industry.

We are not opposed to aquaculture— responsibly undertaken, the culture of marine plants and animals can definitely contribute to human food security. Open net-pen salmon aquaculture, however, is not conducted in a responsible manner. It stands in the way of healthy wild salmon stocks and sustainable fisheries that can feed the world's people.

Everywhere in the world where open net-pen salmon farms have been established alongside wild salmonids, the salmonid populations have plummeted. Until the last few years, Canada's west coast was the only salmon farming region in the world that also still hosted commercial fisheries for salmonids. Sadly, those fisheries are now almost entirely closed. Many wild Pacific salmon populations are now considered at risk or endangered. On the east coast, wild Atlantic salmon populations near open net-pens have been decimated – including those protected by the Species at Risk Act or listed by the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada.

Far from 'easing the pressure on wild salmon', salmon farms are responsible for killing wild salmon outright. Sea lice and pathogens bred at open net-pen aquaculture sites will continue to

risk the existence of wild salmon populations on both of Canada's salmon farming coasts until operations move out of the ocean entirely.

In addition to Canada's international obligations to protect and restore wild Atlantic salmon under NASCO, **the Government of Canada has a duty to protect wild salmon** in all Canadian waters, and failure to do so would be an immense international tragedy at the feet of Canada's political leaders.

The business model that the salmon farming industry is using in Canada depends on the ability to pollute the ocean. This is unacceptable to all of us: the drugs, chemicals, feces, lice and disease pathogens shed by farmed salmon in their multiple millions have been demonstrated to have an adverse impact on the benthic environment and on the survival prospects for both salmon and herring—two fundamental building blocks in the ocean's food web. No land-based industry is permitted to dump its waste like this in Canada—why do you continue to allow it to happen in the ocean?

**We urge you to join the growing number of countries that have said 'no' to open net-pen aquaculture.** Argentina, for example, has banned salmon farming in the ocean altogether, and this alliance has helped to aid in that cause. California, Washington and Alaska have banned open net-pen Atlantic salmon farms and Oregon has never permitted them. Instead, you could encourage the development of aquaculture that can truly add to food security, such as bivalves, seaweed and herbivorous fish. There is great growth potential in these seafood products.

If your party forms government, you will have the tools at your disposal to direct the development of aquaculture in ways that protect the ocean and the communities throughout the globe that depend on the ocean, while still providing economic benefits and much-needed jobs in remote areas.

We are watching; and we look forward to seeing what your party has to say about protecting iconic wild salmon from salmon farming. Will Canada, under your leadership, live up to its reputation for being clean and green?

**Our international networks will share your response to this letter.** We welcome collaboration in the case that your leadership bid is successful; and we look forward to following up post-election.

Sincerely,

**Global Salmon Farm Resistance signatories:**

**Frederik W. Mowinckel** | Farm Turnip .... Not Fish! | Portugal / Norway

**Martina Sasso** | Fundación Rewilding Argentina | Argentina

**Sylvia Earle, Maximiliano Bello, Laura Cassiani** | Mission Blue| USA

**Bill Taylor** | Atlantic Salmon Federation | Canada

**Simon Ryder-Burbidge** | Ecology Action Centre | Canada

**Brian Muldoon** | Healthy Bays Network | Canada

**Elvar Fridriksson** | North Atlantic Salmon Fund | Iceland

**Cristina Mittermeier and Paul Nicklen** | SeaLegacy and Only One

**Natasha Boyland** | Compassion in World Farming | United Kingdom

**Stan Proboszcz** | Watershed Watch Salmon Society | Canada

**Agustin Fox** | Patagonia | USA

**Don Staniford** | Scottish Salmon Watch | Global Alliance Against Industrial Aquaculture | UK

**Karen Wrysten, Kelly Roebuck** | Living Oceans Society | Canada

**Mark Sherwood** | Native Fish Society | USA

**Augusto De Camillis** | Beagle secretos del mar | Argentina

**Richard Flanagan** | Tasmania, Australia

**Jilly Middleton** | Environment Tasmania | Australia

**Yvon Chouinard** | Patagonia | USA

**Alexandra Morton** | Independent scientist | British Columbia Canada

**Hans Cole** | Patagonia | USA

**Ruben M. Oddekalv** | Green warriors of Norway

**Corin Smith** | Inside Scottish Salmon Feedlots | Scotland

**John Murphy** | Salmon Watch Ireland | Ireland

**Clare Pinder** | Guardians of the Sounds | New Zealand

**Kurt Beardslee** | Wild Fish Conservancy | USA

**Rune Jensen** | SalmonCamera | Norway

**Marcela Torres** | Organización Defendamos Chiloé | Chile

**Henry Sharpe** | Frenchman Bay United | USA

**Crystal Canney** | Protect Maine's Fishing Heritage Foundation | USA

**Peter George** | Tasmanian Alliance for Marine Protection and Neighbours of Fish Farming |  
Tasmania