

Calling for Restitution, and Opposing the Presence of Non-Native Species Open Net Pen Aquaculture in Waters of Washington State

WHEREAS the Puget Sound and Salish Sea were exposed to needless damage and future harm due to the August 19, 2017 inadvertent release of non-native fish from the Cooke Aquaculture open net pen facility on Cypress Island in northern Puget Sound;

WHEREAS Cooke Aquaculture is responsible for the safe management of the facility, but did not notify authorities in a timely manner of the release when it happened;

WHEREAS Treaty Tribes in Western Washington are shouldering most of the cleanup burden after the escape of some 305,000 fish;

WHEREAS Cooke Aquaculture seeks to expand their aquaculture operations with the aim of making Puget Sound a global hub for Atlantic salmon open net pens;

WHEREAS open net pens pose a major threat to Puget Sound beyond accidental releases;

WHEREAS the State of Washington has regulatory system does not comply with many international standards, especially those that protect wild fish, and already spends hundreds of millions of dollars to support wild salmon recovery and management; and

WHEREAS Washington is the only U.S. state on the West Coast that allows Atlantic salmon farming in open net pens while all other states have banned Atlantic salmon open net pens to protect wild species, coastal economies, and communities;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Washington State Democratic Central Committee calls for restitution to the Tribes for costs associated with the release, including damage from contamination of wild stocks by viruses and parasites;

THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Washington State Democratic Central Committee firmly opposes the presence and proposed expansion of open net pen aquaculture in the waters of Washington State is in strong support of closing existing open net pens; and

THEREFORE BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED this resolution shall be forwarded to the Governor, and to cognizant officials at the Department of Ecology and the Department of Fish and Wildlife, with appropriate releases to the press.

42 Submitted by the Environment and Climate Caucus on 9/9/17.

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44 The Resolutions Committee recommended that the resolution be sent to the floor.

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46 The Washington State Democratic Central Committee approved this resolution on
47 9/10/17.