

Resolution Supporting a Phase Out & Ban of Non-native Finfish Aquaculture in the Marine Waters of Washington State

WHEREAS on August 19, 2017 an aquaculture operation managed by Cooke Inc. off the coast of Cypress Island in Skagit County, WA containing 305,000 farmed Atlantic Salmon failed and released tens of thousands of fish into the Salish Sea.

WHEREAS the Lummi Nation declared a state of emergency on August 24, 2017, deployed an Emergency Response Team, and caught over 43,000 Atlantic Salmon.

WHEREAS state agencies, as directed by Governor Inslee on August 26, temporarily halted permits for Atlantic Salmon net pens and urged the public to catch as many of the escaped Atlantic Salmon and report the locations of their capture.

WHEREAS Cooke Inc. assured the public that escaped fish would not survive and native fish were not at risk.

WHEREAS Atlantic Salmon were still being caught in the Skagit River on December 1, 2017 - three months after the failure.

WHEREAS numerous studies show the adverse impacts of Atlantic Salmon escapements in the marine and freshwater ecosystems, such as:

- Bisson 2006: Evidence of continual, unreported Atlantic escapes from the industry in Puget Sound.
- Fisher 2014: Atlantic salmon prevalence and occupancy in Canadian Pacific rivers.
- Morton 2017: Evidence of higher disease rates (PRV) in Atlantic salmon migrating through net pen waters.
- Morton, Volpe 2002: Description of farmed salmon captures in 2002.
- Naylor 2005: Overview risks of escaped farmed salmon.
- Volpe 2000: Evidence of reproduction in BC rivers.
- Volpe 2001: Competition study between juvenile Atlantics and natives, quote 'Recent evidence suggests that this species is now naturally reproducing in Vancouver Island rivers' and 'we suggest that Atlantic salmon may be capable of colonizing and persisting in coastal British Columbia river systems that are underutilized by native species, such as steelhead.'

WHEREAS Washington has a total of 7 active Atlantic Salmon operations in the Salish Sea (formerly 8 with the Port Angeles net pen which was recently shut down by Department of Natural Resources for aquatic land lease violations). British Columbia

has about 70 operations -- both native and nonnative finfish aquaculture -- at least a dozen of which are Atlantic Salmon.

WHEREAS California and Alaska have banned Atlantic Salmon aquaculture operations in open marine waters and Oregon doesn't have any.

WHEREAS the Whatcom County Democrats' platform makes the following values & policy statements regarding the environment and Tribal relations:

- Health of the physical environment directly impacts the short-term and long-term health of our citizens, communities, economy, and wildlife, and must be protected.
- Preservation of biological diversity, including endangered and threatened species, and restoration of previously extirpated species.
- Washington State, British Columbia: Clean up the Salish Sea and waters emptying into it, and enact new laws or regulations as needed to eliminate pollution at the source.
- Washington State, Federal Government, Whatcom County: Protect our critical environmental areas, including wilderness areas, old growth forests, wildlife habitat areas and corridor, wetlands, streams, the Columbia River, Salish Sea, coastlines, and Pacific Ocean, through vigilant monitoring and planned growth management.
- Concerted efforts to maintain and protect traditional species of marine, animal, and plant life that are critical to Native American cultures and economies.
- Federal government, Washington State, Whatcom County: Fully respect Lummi and Nooksack treaty rights against interference, including traditional fishing rights and sacred burial grounds.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that we, the Washington State Democratic Central Committee, ask the Washington State Legislature to pass legislation before March 8, 2018 that accomplishes the following:

- Improve oversight, monitoring, and enforcement amongst the Washington state Departments of Natural Resources (DNR), Fish & Wildlife (DFW), and Ecology (DOE) for the remaining net pen operations in the Puget Sound until their aquatic land leases expire.
- Phase out existing aquatic lands leases and prohibit their renewal in the marine waters of Washington State.
- Direct the state to ban future non-native finfish aquaculture leases in open marine waters.

THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we, the Washington State Democratic Central Committee, ask the elected bodies of Whatcom County, the Port of Bellingham,

and cities of Blaine, Bellingham, and Ferndale to contact our 40th and 42nd Legislative District Senators and Representatives to urge them to pass legislation as outlined above.

Submitted by the Native American Caucus to the Washington State Democratic Central Committee for consideration at its January 28, 2018 meeting in Bellingham. (Date Submitted 1/26/2018)

The Resolutions Committee reviewed the resolution and recommend that it be passed.

The Washington State Democratic Central Committee approved this resolution on 1/28/18.