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AUG 16 2011

Dear Directors' Aquaculture Committee Colleagues:

I am writing to inform you regarding the implementation of the Pacific Aquaculture Regulations through the B.C. Aquaculture Regulatory Program, and its associated licensing regime, to inform you of important recent events and to invite your further participation in the consultation process regarding these matters.

This letter provides information on (1) The Impacts of the Cohen Commission on Aquaculture Licence Decisions, and (2) an Update on the Pacific Aquaculture Management Framework, including:

- a) Draft aquaculture management approaches;
- b) Development of Integrated Management of Aquaculture Plans (IMAP);
- c) Potential changes to Conditions of Licence;
- d) DFO's policy on public reporting of aquaculture information; and
- e) Harmonization of the application processes for federal aquaculture licences and provincial land tenures.

**(1) Impacts of the Cohen Commission on Aquaculture Licence Decisions**

The Cohen Commission of Inquiry into the Decline of Sockeye Salmon in the Fraser River has been granted an extension by the Governor General in Council to complete its work. The Commission's Terms of Reference are now revised to call for a final report to be submitted on or before June 30, 2012. Canada will then provide a response to these recommendations. Until the results of the Commission are known, eligible businesses may still apply for licences and amendments. However, decisions on applications for new marine salmon aquaculture sites and for substantial amendments to existing marine salmon aquaculture licences, where there is potential for a significant increase in the environmental footprint, will be postponed. Decisions will continue to be made on aquaculture applications such as:

- all categories of applications related to shellfish, freshwater, enhancement and non-salmonid marine aquaculture;
- applications for administrative, name change or technical amendments to marine salmon licences;
- applications for existing marine salmon farms which have been previously licensed by the Province but which do not yet have a federal licence; and

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- applications for new sites that would replace an existing site, in the same area, where the new site may have a lower environmental impact at the equivalent production level.

## (2) Update on the Pacific Aquaculture Management Framework

DFO is continuing to work on a comprehensive Pacific Aquaculture Management Framework (Framework) that will include Management Approaches, Integrated Management of Aquaculture Plans (IMAPs), and standardized Conditions of Licence. The Framework will include development of a policy on public reporting, and a harmonized federal/provincial licensing and leasing application process. It is the intent of DFO to work collaboratively with First Nations to develop these tools over the next year. When completed, these will provide a comprehensive planning, management, and reporting framework for aquaculture management in British Columbia. DFO hopes to work with you in the coming months to develop the foundation for establishment of new advisory processes for aquaculture, including mechanisms for engaging First Nations in an ongoing dialogue about how to improve all elements of the management Framework. The main elements of this Framework are outlined in greater detail below.

### a) Draft Management Approaches

DFO Pacific Region is currently working with our Ottawa colleagues in order to develop a series of management approaches related to aquaculture in the Pacific Region. Initially, the approaches will reflect current practices.

### b) Integrated Management of Aquaculture Plans (IMAPs)

IMAPs will serve a similar role to that of Integrated Fisheries Management Plans (IFMPs) in commercial fisheries. IMAPs will provide an overview of general management approaches for marine finfish and shellfish aquaculture activities within the Pacific Region. IMAPs, and the associated development of advisory processes for the management of aquaculture, will facilitate discussions about area-based management and ecosystem approaches. IMAPs will also support the development of multi-year management strategies for each of the aquaculture sectors.

Participation by First Nations, Industry and Stakeholders is critical to the IMAP process and the sustainable management of the aquaculture industry in British Columbia. Initial engagement on IMAP development will take place during September 2011, with consultations on a posted version of a full interim IMAP taking place during October 2011. DFO's objective is to develop an initial interim marine finfish IMAP by December 2011. More comprehensive IMAPs, including development of advisory processes, will be developed collaboratively during 2012. An initial interim shellfish IMAP will proceed along approximately the same timeline.



c) Conditions of Licence

DFO is continuing to improve the general aquaculture conditions of licence, including requirements for monitoring, reporting and mitigation. Early identification of concerns about specific Conditions of Licence will be important to ensure timely consideration in the decision making process. If there are specific Conditions of Licence that you would like to provide input on, please contact:

Marine Finfish Aquaculture: *Aquaculture Resource Manager, Bernie John Taekema by email at [Bernie.John.Taekema@dfo-mpo.gc.ca](mailto:Bernie.John.Taekema@dfo-mpo.gc.ca) or by telephone at (250) 754-0398.*

Shellfish Aquaculture: *Aquaculture Resource Manager, Kerry Marcus by email at [Kerry.Marcus@dfo-mpo.gc.ca](mailto:Kerry.Marcus@dfo-mpo.gc.ca) or by telephone at (250) 754-0210.*

Freshwater Aquaculture: *Aquaculture Resource Manager, Gabrielle Kosmider by email at [Gabrielle.Kosmider@dfo-mpo.gc.ca](mailto:Gabrielle.Kosmider@dfo-mpo.gc.ca) or by telephone at (250) 754-0404.*

d) Public Reporting

The new federal aquaculture program in B.C. supports increased transparency and DFO will implement web-based public reporting of fish health, sea lice levels, presence of disease, and other data. DFO has committed to share as much information as possible about the performance of the aquaculture industry with the public, while respecting the *Access to Information Act*, and the *Privacy Act*.

DFO is in the process of developing an information management system for aquaculture. The first reported data on escapes, marine mammal interactions, incidental catch, sea lice and a list of all aquaculture licence holders is expected to be on the website soon. Regular posting of data will be posted in the future. This information will be available at:

<http://www.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/aquaculture/reporting-rapports/index-eng.htm>

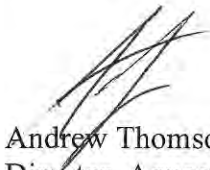
e) Harmonized Licence Application Process

As you are aware, DFO is currently developing a harmonized application process for new tenure and aquaculture licences with the Province of B. C. Work is progressing steadily and we would like to extend our appreciation for you and your colleagues' continued cooperation as we develop our harmonized approaches. Once developed, this new process should reduce duplication and overlap with respect to consultation on tenure and aquaculture applications.

In conclusion, DFO is committed to engaging with Provincial colleagues, industry, stakeholders and First Nations, on the management and regulation of the aquaculture industry in B.C. We want to work with you to discuss the development of some of the core components of the new Aquaculture Management Framework for the Pacific Region, including the development of IMAPs, Conditions of Licence, and management approaches.

We look forward to continuing to work with you on these important issues in the upcoming months.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A. Thomson', is written over the printed name.

Andrew Thomson  
Director, Aquaculture Management Division  
Fisheries and Oceans Canada