

Special Legislative Committee

on Sustainable Aquaculture

- On November 22, 2005, the Legislative Assembly appointed the Special Legislative Committee on Sustainable Aquaculture (SLCSA) to examine, inquire into and make recommendations with respect to sustainable aquaculture in BC.
- As an all-party Committee, the SLCSA was unique in that the official opposition chaired the Committee and represented the majority of its members.
- On May 16, 2007, the SLCSA released its final report which focused on several key areas of concern and offered 55 recommendations to address specific issues.
- The Province's approach has been to focus on the spirit and intent of the SLCSA recommendations and address the underlying concerns raised without adopting the recommendations verbatim or drawing the same conclusions as the SLCSA.
- Five of the recommendations stood out as potentially having a substantial effect on the future development of the salmon farming industry.
 1. Transition to ocean-based closed containment within five years: the Province has undertaken a structured approach to review of containment technologies in advance of considering funding any commercial pilots.
 2. No new finfish farms north of Cape Caution: On March 27, 2008, the Province suspended the issuance of licenses and tenures for finfish aquaculture on the North Coast.
 3. No new finfish species: no new finfish species have been approved for aquaculture since the SLCSA submitted its report.
 4. No new finfish tenures: the Province placed a moratorium on new finfish tenures pending the Federal government taking over management of aquaculture.
 5. Creation of a First Nations Watchman program: Budget constraints have become the limiting factor. A pilot program would cost approximately \$1 million per year.
- Some of the recommendations of the Special Committee on Sustainable Aquaculture were incorporated into provincial initiatives such as: engaging in dialogue on emerging containment technologies and advising on closed containment proposals developed by industry, special interest groups and first nations (rec 1.1-1.3); and taking steps towards implementation of an ecosystem based approach to watershed management through inter-agency

management committees (rec 6.1).

- The Province has encouraged the federal government to seriously consider the aquaculture specific recommendations of the Pacific Salmon Forum Report and the Special Committee on Sustainable Aquaculture during the transfer of aquaculture management to the federal government.
- The Committee recommended a move to closed containment in five years. This period of proposed adjustment passed without closed containment systems being put in place in BC, but much work has been done to increase our knowledge of the technology.
- An assessment of past and presently available containment technology was completed by the Canadian Science Advisory Secretariat, which also assessed waste treatment options. The Province provided funding to support the Canadian Science Advisory Secretariat review.
- The review found no systems currently available for propagation of market size salmon.
- The Ministry continues to review and advise on closed containment proposals developed by industry, special interest groups and First Nations.