

Submission to the Cohen Commission
Sept. 16, 2010

Victoria, BC

While the commission is concerned about the sustainability of the Fraser Sockeye specifically, I wish to address my concerns about the sustainability of all wild fish along the coast of BC.

With permission, I wish to make comments regarding government oversight of the harvesting of sea food products, including farmed fish as well as wild fish.

It would seem that the ministries of the government are not communicating accurately with each other, to the detriment of the health of wild fish.

As I understand it, the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food is supposed to ensure the quality of our food supply, and the Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks, is supposed to ensure that where our food is produced is free of toxins which could harm all living creatures which live in those areas. If fish farms have infected Atlantic salmon, such as with IHN virus, in them, and use various chemicals to control such infections, but do not report these to the appropriate ministries, then the contagion can be spread to wild fish in the area.

Since the fish farm industry is primarily run by companies outside of Canada, it concerns me that they are not accountable to the laws of Canada which require protection of food produced in Canada from substances which could harm the environment and, in this case, the wild fish which share the environment with the farmed fish.

I want the Canadian Food Inspection Agency to be provided with data from the salmon feedlots about outbreaks of pathogens, and for this information to be shared among the ministries of fisheries and environment to protect the wild fisheries. I want government inspection of fish farms.

Ultimately, I believe these measures will secure the future of the Fraser Sockeye, because by protecting their environment as they move through the waters of BC, they will be able to live their lifecycle as nature intended. While the effects of ocean warming will affect their food supply, this issue is beyond the scope of this commission, but one which humanity must address.