



September 28<sup>th</sup>, 2023

MP Rachel Blaney  
427 10th Avenue  
Campbell River, BC  
V9W 4E4

Via email: [rachel.blaney@parl.gc.ca](mailto:rachel.blaney@parl.gc.ca)

Dear MP Blaney,

**Re: Rachel Blaney, MP, September 13 letter to the Honourable Diane Lebovillier, Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard**

I am writing again (see appendix) in response to the misrepresentation of your North Island constituents and the BC Salmon Farming Transition Plan in your recent letter to Minister Diane Lebovillier on September 13, 2023. As our Member of Parliament, you continue to show that you do not have the best interests of the families and communities in your riding.

In your letter, you made several false statements, including:

- *“As I am sure you are aware, the government has decided to remove fish farms from the water.”;*
- *“In 2020, the Liberal government said it would phase out fish farms by 2022.”* And;
- *“The government needs to follow through on its commitment to remove the fish farms from the water.”*

The language in both former [Minister Jordan](#) and [Minister Murray's](#) mandate letters is to *“Work with the province of British Columbia and Indigenous communities to create a responsible plan to transition from open net-pen salmon farming in coastal British Columbia waters by 2025 and begin to work to introduce Canada’s first-ever Aquaculture Act.”*

As you should be aware, the 2022 proposed vision for the BC salmon farming Transition Plan from the Department of Fisheries and Oceans’ [discussion framework for a BC aquaculture open-net pen transition plan](#) provided additional detail regarding the transition process: *“advance innovation and growth of sustainable aquaculture in British Columbia that progressively minimizes or eliminates interactions between open-net pens and wild salmon, while also taking into account social, cultural and economic objectives.”*

As detailed in this most recent clarifying statement on transition, the federal government is not committed to removing fish farms from the water and did not state it would phase out fish farms by 2022. The salmon farming sector is committed to innovation and reducing interactions with wild salmon. Cumulative and federal government science has been clear – salmon farms pose minimal risk to wild

Pacific salmon. We have repeatedly stated that we will continue to innovate to further reduce potential risk.

By asking for a plan to transition our workers, your letter demonstrates your personal agenda to remove salmon farms. You are asking for workers – from the communities you are supposed to represent and fight for – to lose their jobs.

A small short-term monetary fix will not offset the long-term devastation these communities will experience if our sector is forced to move to land and leave British Columbia. Two-thirds of salmon farming employees are under 35. Many young people are attracted to the sector to stay in their home communities or set roots in rural coastal communities. If the farms are removed, they will be forced to move elsewhere, further devastating the rural coastal communities you have been entrusted to represent.

Additionally, we believe it is the decision of the Nations whose territories we operate in to decide if farms stay in the ocean. We remain committed to rights, title, and reconciliation, and our farms are currently operating in agreement, negotiation, or established partnerships with First Nations.

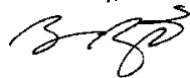
The BC salmon farming sector is highly regulated by DFO, CFIA, and Health Canada. Our sector produces affordable, healthy, carbon-friendly, and grown-in-Canada food for Canadian families, especially now as families and communities struggle with food affordability, food insecurity, and the impacts of wildfires and climate change.

Modern, sustainable, in-ocean salmon farming provides thousands of family-supporting jobs in rural, coastal communities in BC and the Lower Mainland. From marine repair to infrastructure to feed, ferry transport to fish care to processing. The salmon farming sector in British Columbia is a vital part of the local economy and Canada's Blue Economy, providing \$1.2 billion in annual economic activity and supporting thousands of families and businesses throughout the region.

MP Blaney, we strongly recommend you do your due diligence. Speak with the First Nations within whose territories we operate. Speak with the many supplier and service companies that rely on the salmon farming sector. Speak with the young people who will lose their jobs and their ability to remain in their hometowns. Without doing so, you will not understand the real human impacts of your statements.

Salmon farmers are members of your constituency too.

Sincerely,



Brian Kingzett, M.Sc., MBA  
Executive Director  
BC Salmon Farmers Association  
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250-850-7043

cc.

The Honourable Diane Lebovillier, MP, Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard  
[dfo.minister-ministre.mpo@dfo-mpo.gc.ca](mailto:dfo.minister-ministre.mpo@dfo-mpo.gc.ca)

The Honourable David Eby, MLA, Premier and President of Executive Council [premier@gov.bc.ca](mailto:premier@gov.bc.ca)

The Honourable Nathan Cullen, MLA, Minister of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship  
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The Honourable Michele Babchuk, MLA, North Island [michele.babchuk.MLA@leg.bc.ca](mailto:michele.babchuk.MLA@leg.bc.ca)

Kermit Dahl, Mayor, City of Campbell River [Mayor.Dahl@campbellriver.ca](mailto:Mayor.Dahl@campbellriver.ca)

Patricia Corbett-Labatt, Mayor, District of Port Hardy [pcorbett-labatt@porthardy.ca](mailto:pcorbett-labatt@porthardy.ca)

Mark Baker, Mayor, Village of Sayward [mark.baker@saywardvalley.ca](mailto:mark.baker@saywardvalley.ca)

James Furney, Mayor, Town of Port McNeill [mayorfurney@portmcneill.ca](mailto:mayorfurney@portmcneill.ca)

Michael Lott, Mayor, Village of Gold River [mlott@goldriver.ca](mailto:mlott@goldriver.ca)

Dallas Smith, Spokesperson, Coalition of First Nations for Finfish Stewardship  
[dallas@firstnationsforfinfish.ca](mailto:dallas@firstnationsforfinfish.ca)

**APPENDIX**

May 25<sup>th</sup>, 2023

MP Rachel Blaney  
427 10th Avenue  
Campbell River, BC  
V9W 4E4

Via email: [rachel.blaney@parl.gc.ca](mailto:rachel.blaney@parl.gc.ca)

Dear MP Blaney,

**Re: MP Blaney writes letter to fisheries minister pleading for fish farm transition plan**

Your riding represents the majority of salmon farmers in British Columbia. As such, we were disheartened to read your [recent letter](#) on May 11 to DFO Fisheries Minister Joyce Murray. As our Member of Parliament, it does not appear that you are prepared to support and fight for our families and communities.

Your letter asks for a plan to transition our workers, implying that the BC salmon farming sector will be removed from our communities. This is not language that the sector nor the Federal government has used when discussing the transition plan, so why is it the language you use?

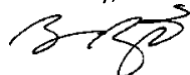
Our communities do not need a short-term monetary Band-Aid; we need regulatory certainty. A small monetary fix will not offset the long-term devastation these communities will experience if our sector leaves British Columbia.

Cumulative and federal government science has been clear; salmon farms do not pose more than minimal risk to wild Pacific salmon, and we have repeatedly stated that we will continue to innovate to reduce potential risk further. As we remain committed to rights, title, and reconciliation, we believe it is the decision of the Nations whose territories we operate in to decide if farms stay in the ocean, not yours.

BC Salmon Farmers are committed to sustainable and responsible farming practices and have a proven track record of working with local communities and Indigenous peoples to protect the environment and promote growth in the Blue Economy. The salmon farming sector in British Columbia is a vital part of the local economy, providing \$1.2 billion in annual economic activity and supporting thousands of families and businesses throughout the region.

We encourage you to do your due diligence and speak with the First Nations within whose territories we operate, as well as the many supplier and service companies that rely on our sector to understand our sector's real impacts on these communities.

Sincerely,



Brian Kingzett, M.Sc., MBA  
Executive Director  
BC Salmon Farmers Association

September 13, 2023

To: Honourable Diane Lebouthillier  
Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and Coast Guard

Sent via email to: [DFO.Minister-Ministre.MPO@dfo-mpo.gc.ca](mailto:DFO.Minister-Ministre.MPO@dfo-mpo.gc.ca)

Dear Minister,

I offer congratulations on your appointment as Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard. As the NDP MP for North Island – Powell River, I represent a region that relies heavily on fisheries for economic prosperity.

As I am sure you are aware, the government has decided to remove fish farms from the water. This decision will directly affect people and businesses in my riding. Since the decision was made, I have spoken to many stakeholders, including the local union representatives, impacted communities, First Nations, and small businesses, all of whom expressed concerns about their future and the need for a transition plan.

Following my discussions with those groups, I have repeatedly asked your colleague, Minister Murray for a clear and transparent transition plan to move fish farms from water to land. Back in 2019, the Prime Minister mandated that the government would work with local stakeholders to create such a transition plan, yet as of now there still has not been a plan communicated to us, nor has there been any movement in the way of an open process that alleviates the anxieties of local stakeholders.

In 2020, the Liberal government said it would phase out fish farms by 2022. We are now halfway through 2023 and the deadline has been moved back to 2025. The people in my riding are frustrated by the uncertainty this delay has caused, given that there is still so little communication about the transition. They want to know that you will stop delaying and take action. The government needs to follow through on its commitment to remove the fish farms from the water.

As I have with the previous minister, I urge you to

- develop a strong and thorough transition plan/jobs plan that encompasses stakeholder consultation
- provide a timeline for the plan that holds firm on the 2025 deadline
- establish an office in highly impacted communities to assist workers in finding alternate jobs in their areas, including staff that can identify employment and training opportunities for those who have lost their jobs
- use money from the \$649 million Pacific Salmon Strategy towards regions and communities impacted by the changeover in fish farms, as moving fish farms to land would meet the strategy's mandate to restore wild salmon
- acknowledge and work with the First Nations who have developed positive relationships with the industry
- ensure that the people of my riding will not be forgotten as the fish farm relocation process is undertaken

While I respect the government's decision regarding fish farms, I am frustrated that there has been little communication from the government regarding the transition plan.

Additionally, I have spoken with roe herring fishermen in my riding to discuss the current high cost of licence fees, which I understand are set at \$4,000 while their fishing quota has been reduced from 20% to 10%.



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES  
CANADA



*Rachel Blaney*

Member of Parliament  
North Island-Powell River

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*Rachel Blaney*

Member of Parliament  
North Island-Powell River

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I recognize the importance of protecting vulnerable ecosystems; however, it is also critical that any decisions, fees, and quotas be determined thoughtfully and with a clear explanation of the factors considered.

Please provide an explanation for the decisions to set the quota at 10% and the licence fees at \$4,000.

Compounding the issue of the high cost of licence fees is the lack of limits on foreign ownership of commercial fishing licences and quotas in the Pacific Region. As I and my fellow NDP colleagues brought up in previous letters to Minister Murray, the government has continued to jeopardize the livelihoods of Canadian workers and the sustainability of our fisheries with the continued sale of our fisheries to foreign businesses.

This is despite the implementation of the Policy for Preserving the Independence of the Inshore Fleet in Canada's Atlantic Fisheries, which sets a framework for selling licences in the Atlantic region. That policy has resulted in a stabilizing of fisheries incomes in the Atlantic Region.

The people of the Pacific Region deserve the same consideration as their counterparts in the Maritimes. Please recognize these important concerns and ban the transfer of Canadian commercial fishing licences and quotas to foreign owners or foreign beneficial interests.

Finally, I have met with David Mills of Watershed Watch and SkeenaWild Conservation Trust, who has raised the alarm about the significant impact Alaska interception fisheries have had on communities across British Columbia.

As I understand it, last year the Alaskan fleet in the Southeast took more Canadian salmon than our entire marine salmon harvest. According to reports, the 2.2 million Canadian salmon intercepted by Alaska cost our economy \$100 million. Commercial fisheries, communities, and First Nations who are working to restore their fishing rights, are all deeply impacted by the Alaska interception fisheries.

I agree with David Mills that the \$649 million investment in Pacific salmon will not pay off if those salmon end up in Alaska's nets. Unfortunately, this is exactly what is happening all too frequently.

Please let me know whether the federal government is doing anything to compel Alaska to negotiate its actions regarding salmon interception, so that BC stocks are protected.

Many people in my riding and in ridings across British Columbia rely on fisheries to sustain their economy. They deserve to have their voices heard.

I look forward to receiving your responses to the issues I have brought up. I would like to meet with you when the House resumes so we can discuss these concerns and how we can work together to help the people in this region.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Blaney".

Rachel Blaney, MP  
North Island-Powell River

cc: The Hon. Gudie Hutchings, Minister of Rural Economic Development