

JANUARY 18, 2018

Dear Honorable Legislative Leaders,

We respectfully urge you to enact legislation this session that eliminates Atlantic salmon aquaculture from our marine waters as quickly as possible. Too much is at stake—and the risks are too great—to allow Atlantic salmon aquaculture to continue now. This is simply about ATLANTIC SALMON.

A healthy and productive Salish Sea is essential to our way of life and to our survival. We have harvested Pacific salmon (native salmon) since time immemorial and we have an inherent right, secured by Treaty with the United States, to continue to pursue our way of life of gathering, hunting and harvesting natural resources. Along with this right comes a sacred obligation to protect our native salmon.

Today we speak out in support of legislation to eliminate these invasive Atlantic salmon from the Salish Sea to protect native salmon.

Atlantic salmon are an invasive species; a pollutant, and pose an unacceptable risk to native salmon and to the Salish Sea that we all share. They should not be allowed in our waters. Our native salmon are already under tremendous pressure to survive, we cannot afford this risk.

This past summer, hundreds of thousands of Atlantic salmon spilled into the Salish Sea, jeopardizing our already threatened native salmon stocks. Of those that escaped, approximately 100,000 are still out there and unaccounted for. Tribal fishers recently caught Atlantic salmon from the Cooke spill in the Skagit River, more than 50 miles upriver. Nobody knows where the rest are.

Atlantic salmon have the potential to transmit disease to our already weakened native salmon. They compete with our native salmon for dwindling resources such as food and spawning grounds. If they ever established themselves here Atlantic salmon would devastate not only Treaty protected tribal fisheries, but fisheries that all Washingtonians enjoy and benefit from.

Multiple studies from British Columbia demonstrate the risk of colonization by Atlantic salmon in our streams and the risk of competition with wild salmon. (Morton, A, and Volpe. 2000. A Description of Escaped Farmed Atlantic Salmon *Salmo salar* Caputres and Their Characteristics in One Pacific Salmon Fishery Area in British Columbia, Canada, in 2000). Volpe et al reported repeated successful spawning in the Tsitika River on the coast of British Columbia in 1999 and concluded, “the potential for colonization demands that a conservative approach be taken to the expansion of Atlantic salmon culture in the Pacific.” (Volpe, J. P., Taylor, E. B., Rimmer, D. W. and Glickman, B. W. (2000), Evidence of Natural Reproduction of Aquaculture-Escaped Atlantic Salmon in a Coastal British Columbia River. Conservation Biology, 14: 899–903. doi:10.1046/j.1523-1739.2000.99194.x)

We already know the risk is simply too great, and too much is at stake. ***Atlantic salmon don't belong in the Pacific.***

Washington Treaty Tribes stand united to respectfully urge you to enact legislation this session that stops the breeding and farming of the invasive Atlantic salmon in our waters as quickly as possible.

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List of Washington Treaty Tribal
Chairs

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Lummi Nation

Brian Cladoosby
Swinomish Tribe

Robert Kelly
Nooksack Tribe

Ben Joseph
Sauk Suaittle Tribe

Jennifer Washington
Upper Skagit Tribe

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