



**Friends of Clayoquot Sound**

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Media Release

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## **ESCAPE OF FARMED ATLANTIC SALMON IN CLAYOQUOT SOUND**

Tofino, BC- - An unknown number of farmed Atlantic salmon have escaped from a net-cage containing 20,000 fish at Mainstream's Saranac farm in Clayoquot Sound. Mainstream Canada is a subsidiary of Norwegian multinational Cermaq aquaculture. Sources say a harvesting boat tore a hole in one of the net cages. This is the second major escape of farmed Atlantics on the west coast of Vancouver Island since 2004.

The escape comes just one week after BC Minister of Agriculture and Lands, Pat Bell, approved an open net-cage salmon farm in a nearby region, ignoring the recommendations of the Special Committee for Sustainable Aquaculture to transition the industry to closed containment. Closed containment tanks would provide a solid barrier between farmed fish and the ocean, and would greatly reduce the likelihood of escapes, as well as other detrimental effects of salmon farming.

In the past 20 years, over a million farmed salmon have been reported to escape into the waters of British Columbia. Escaped farmed salmon can be carriers of disease and parasites, compete with wild salmon, and flourish and breed in BC rivers. The long-term effects of these escapes on wild salmon are not yet known, but experts believe impacts could be dramatic.

“Unfortunately events such as this can be expected. The BC industry has a history of negative ecological impacts such as escapes, sea lice epidemics, mass sea lion kills, and chemical use. We desperately need to transition salmon farms into closed containment facilities so that the industry can operate more responsibly,” said Dom Repta of the Friends of Clayoquot Sound. “Any escapes are simply unacceptable.”

BC's Special Committee on Sustainable Aquaculture (SCSA) spent 18 months seeking input from scientists, First Nations, conservation groups, industry and concerned communities to help define sustainable salmon farming. The SCSA report reflects the weight of scientific evidence that shows open net-cage salmon farms cannot co-exist in a sustainable manner with wild salmon and coastal ecosystems. For years, the Friends of Clayoquot Sound, a member of the Coastal Alliance for Aquaculture Reform, have been working to transition the industry into closed containment facilities.

“If the provincial government would move forward and implement the recommendations of their self-appointed Committee, negative impacts such as escapes could be drastically reduced,” said Maryjka Mychajlowycz of the Friends of Clayoquot Sound. “The precious and dwindling wild salmon of BC and Clayoquot Sound should not be exposed to further risks from open net-cage salmon farms.”