



## Gwaii Haanas Tour Operators Association

Fostering Quality, Ethics and Communication  
PlaceofWonder.com

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April 3, 2006

Honourable Gordon Campbell  
Premier of British Columbia  
PO Box 9041  
Stn Prov Gov  
Victoria, BC  
V8W 9E1      [premier@gov.bc.ca](mailto:premier@gov.bc.ca)

Dear Honourable Premier,

Members of the Gwaii Haanas Tour Operators Association (GHTOA) are concerned about the provincial Government's plan to locate finfish farms near the mouth of the Skeena River in northwest British Columbia.

The Skeena River has the second most abundant salmon runs in Canada and is a world famous steelhead river. So far, there have been no fish farms located in British Columbia's northern waters.

Scientists have confirmed that sea lice thrive in and around fish farms and endanger young wild salmon. Using pesticides, fungicides, antibiotics and other chemicals to treat sea lice, diseases and other problems caused by fish farming, only compound the dangers facing young wild salmon. Escaped farmed Atlantic salmon further threaten the biological integrity of wild salmon stocks.

GHTOA members cannot condone these risks to wild salmon and their habitats. We are deeply concerned about pollution of our coastal waters and what the loss of this important natural resource would mean to the sustainability of our eco-tourism businesses and to future generations.

GHTOA members believe the questionable economic benefits of finfish farming do not warrant risking valuable and irreplaceable wild salmon populations.

The provincial government's decision on this issue can adversely affect the sustainability of countless, small eco-tourism businesses operating in the region. We urge you to restore the moratorium on fish farming until the above-mentioned issues have been properly addressed by science and are better understood by the public.

We ask for your reply regarding the following two questions:

- Please explain your thoughts and opinions on locating finfish farms near the mouth of the Skeena River.
- Additionally, we specifically request your opinions regarding compensation to our eco-tourism businesses if these northern finfish farms are permitted by government and subsequently cause a significant decline in wild salmon stocks throughout the region.

We ask that you reply at once to confirm receipt of this letter. Please include in your initial reply an indication of when we may expect to receive a detailed response to the questions noted above.

Thank you.

Sincerely,  
Gord Pincock  
GHTOA President

cc: Honourable Pat Bell - Minister of Agriculture and Lands  
Honourable Barry Penner - Minister of Environment  
MLA Robin Austin - NDP Critic for Fisheries

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