

For Immediate Release

**From Sea to Poisoned Sea, Harper Government proposes new regulation
that would facilitate toxic pesticide use on salmon farms**

February 16, 2011, Fredericton, Halifax, Vancouver:

Despite mounting public concern over the impact of aquaculture pesticides on the marine environment, Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) is in the process of developing regulations that will facilitate and enable the ongoing use of eco-toxic pesticides in the open water by the salmon aquaculture industry. DFO's proposed "Pathogen and Pest Treatment" regulation would undermine the *Fisheries Act*, which prohibits the dumping of toxic substance into fish bearing waters, effectively exempting salmon farmers from legislation designed to protect the marine environment and Canada's fisheries. Indeed, DFO is tasked to oversee the very *Act* it threatens to weaken with these new regulations.

Today 20 groups, representing tens of thousands of Canadians, have sent a joint letter to Prime Minister Stephen Harper urging him to protect the marine environment and coastal communities by halting progress in the development of these regulations.

"Sea lice infestations plaguing the aquaculture industry highlight the inherent unsustainability of open net pen salmon aquaculture as it is now practiced in Canada," said Matthew Abbott, Coordinator for Fundy Baykeeper, in St Andrews, New Brunswick. "On top of that, instead of ensuring the aquaculture industry does not harm the marine environment, DFO is planning to facilitate the use of toxic pesticides in the aquaculture industry."

Pesticides being used by the aquaculture industry in New Brunswick are toxic not only to sea lice, but also to other crustaceans including lobster and the many small crustaceans (like krill) that form the base of the food chain. Repeated pesticide use in open waters threatens to disrupt both marine ecosystems and the economies of coastal communities that rely on traditional fisheries, such as the lobster fishery.

"Wherever open net-cages are used to rear hundreds of thousands of densely packed farmed salmon the industry faces problems controlling parasites and disease," said John Werring of the David Suzuki Foundation and the Coastal Alliance for Aquaculture Reform in British Columbia. "Rather than undermining the *Fisheries Act* and aiding the salmon farming industry in supplementing their arsenal of toxic weapons, DFO should be investing in the development of alternative technologies that do not require pesticide use, such as closed containment."

Signatories to the letter include: Fundy Baykeeper, Living Oceans Society, David Suzuki Foundation, Ecology Action Centre, Grand Manan Fishermen's Association, Fundy Weir Fishermen's Association, Fundy North Fishermen's Association, Watershed Watch Salmon Society, Georgia Strait Alliance, T. Buck Suzuki Environmental Foundation, Fraser Riverkeeper, St. Mary's Bay Coastal Alliance, Atlantic Salmon Federation, NS Salmon Association, PEI Council of the Atlantic Salmon Federation, NB Salmon Council, Friends of Shelburne Harbour, Maliseet Nation Conservation Council, Friar's Bay Development Association, and Partnership for the Sustainable Development of Digby Neck & The Islands.

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For more information contact:

East Coast: Matthew Abbott, Fundy Baykeeper, 506-529-8838

Rob Johnson, Ecology Action Centre, 902-446-4840

West Coast: Catherine Stewart, Living Oceans Society and CAAR, 604-916-6722

John Werring, David Suzuki Foundation and CAAR, 604-732-4228 ext 1245

Letter and backgrounder attached