

December 12, 2012

The Hon. Sterling Belliveau
Minister, Fisheries and Aquaculture
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Dear Minister:

I recently I requested and received monitoring data on fin fish lease # 0772 at Owls Head, Nova Scotia from your department.

According to the data, the Owls Head farm site has been monitored since 2008. In July 2009, high sulphide levels (over 1500 μM) were reported at the site. In fact, 12 of 18 sampling stations were over 1500 μM with 6 sampling station over 3000 μM . The Owls Head site was fallowed for two years and selected sampling stations were re-sampling in 2010, 2011 and 2012.

I have now examined this data and note that the stations selected for sampling in 2012 do not correspond to any of the sampling sites found to be high in 2009, 2010 or 2011 with two exceptions. Station OWL20 was sampled in July 2009 (5740 μM) and again in 2010 (1737 μM) and 2011 (84 μM). Station OWL28 had sulphide levels of 1185 μM in 2009 and was not re-sampled again until 2012 at which time the sulphides were 398 μM . Except for these two site, none of the other sampling stations which had high sulphides in 2009 (OWL21-35) were re-sampled in 2010, 2011 or 2012. I have attached a copy of the monitoring data and a map indicating the area of high sulphides in 2009 and the location of the sampling sites in 2012.

What is the department's scientific rationale for not sampling all the stations found to have high sulphides in 2009 in 2012? And, why were some of the 2012 sampling stations located over 100 metres from the farm site and area of highest contamination? I can understand why the reference sites are located away from the farm but not the farm sampling stations.

There are now over 600,000 salmon on this site. Given the environmental monitoring history of this site, I expect sulphides to once again rise over 1500 μM but none of the sampling station identified in 2012 will capture this rise since it appears that none of the stations are located under the farm site. How does the department plan to effective monitoring the environmental performance of the fish farm if none of the sampling station are under the farm site?

I look forward to your reply to my questions.

Sincerely,

original signed

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Enclosure: Environmental Monitoring program / Sample results for 2009 and 2012