

Preservation group wants salmon farm moratorium



More salmon aquaculture pens like these are planned for Nova Scotia. (CBC)

A group on the Eastern Shore is calling for a total moratorium on fish farms in Nova Scotia.

The Association for the Preservation of the Eastern Shore believes the recent confirmed outbreak of disease in salmon aquaculture pens in Shelburne Harbour is a good reason to rethink the idea of farming fish in coastal waters.

The Canadian Food Inspection Agency confirmed an outbreak of infectious salmon anemia at a Cooke Aquaculture fish farm Wednesday.

The Eastern Shore is considered a prime spot for new pens.

"Initially a proposal for nine on the Eastern Shore and there are three going through the licensing process so far," said Karin Cope, a member of the preservation group.

Thousands of fish were destroyed after the virus was suspected in the Cooke Aquaculture pens in Shelburne, and Cope said that should be a warning to government to stop future fish farms.

Instead there are plans by Cooke Aquaculture to build more.

"The federal government and provincial governments are basically going to blanket the coast with them," she said.

Cope said existing industries like tourism and lobster and crab fisheries could all be threatened by the expanding aquaculture business.

"It's not prudent to put these large farms in these bays and risk destroying these other industries," she said.

The Eastern Shore group is planning an information session in the near future to help rally forces opposed to fish farming in Nova Scotia.