

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Sheet Harbour, NS

The Association for the Preservation of the Eastern Shore Mails Thousands of Letters Opposing Open Pen Salmon Aquaculture to Provincial Politicians

The Association for the Preservation of the Eastern Shore (APES) has mailed thousands of letters calling for a moratorium on open pen finfish aquaculture to provincial politicians, including Premier Darrell Dexter, NS Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture Minister Sterling Belliveau, and local NDP MLAs Sid Prest (Eastern Shore) and Jim Boudreau (Guysborough-Sheet Harbour).

“Based on the evidence of disease and escapes to date in salmon fish farms we’ve been calling for a precautionary approach to this industry,” says Tom McInnes, President of both the recently formed organization and the Sheet Harbour Chamber of Commerce. “We are also concerned that provincial aquaculture licensing practices seem at odds with other legislation and regulations mandating both federal and provincial responsibility for safeguarding water quality, existing uses of space, and habitat for a number of species. Here for example, we have recovering wild salmon stocks in the West River and Piping Plovers and other endangered bird species within less than 3 kilometers of proposed open pen fish farms.”

Association members say that now that an outbreak of Infectious Salmon Anemia (ISA) has been confirmed in Nova Scotia, they are even more worried about the negative impacts of open pen finfish aquaculture.

“Minister Belliveau’s refusal to discuss the source and extent of this outbreak has not given us confidence that the provincial NDP is looking out for the health and well-being of our coastal communities,” adds Vice-President Marike Finlay. “If the ISA outbreak is ‘a normal business day’ in the aquaculture industry, then I think we all need to be afraid.”

“Polluting our harbours and risking the destruction of our sustainable fisheries, tourism and construction industries, and ways of life for the sake of a few minimum-wage jobs just doesn’t make sense,” says Dr. Finlay. “We don’t believe the provincial government has the right to impose fish farming on this community against its will.”

The Association for the Preservation of the Eastern Shore (APES) is sponsoring a community dialogue at the Sheet Harbour Lion’s Center on 14 March at 6:30 pm on the history, science and economics of East Coast salmon aquaculture with independent scientist Inka Milewski and Fundy Baykeeper Matt Abbott and others.

“We are interested in getting the facts,” asserts Tammy Mills, co-treasurer of APES and a local lobster fisherman.

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