



March 19, 2021

The Right Hon. Justin Trudeau, PC, MP
Prime Minister of Canada
Prime Minister's Office
80 Wellington Street
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A3

Re: Open Letter Regarding Seafood Farming Jobs Opportunity For Canada's Post-COVID Recovery

Dear Prime Minister:

This letter follows our letters of January 28, 2021, regarding the potential of Canadian aquaculture to contribute to low-carbon economy recovery, and February 10, 2021, regarding the role of innovation and technology in our sector. This letter outlines the key role that aquaculture can play in post-COVID jobs recovery.

There are perhaps no other sectors in Canada that have the capacity to simultaneously drive good-paying job creation, provide domestic food security, support meaningful indigenous reconciliation and realize sustainable food production, as the seafood farming sector can. Canada's farmed seafood sector is young and has been recognized by economic experts, including under your own Economic Tables, led by Dominic Barton, as having tremendous potential for sustainable growth. Global demand for our products is very strong, and our sustainable growth opportunity is almost limitless. Canadian aquaculture can make an important contribution to Canada's efforts to "build back better" as part of our national COVID-19 recovery strategy.

And yet our biggest challenge is that the Canadian government has not championed or embraced this opportunity, instead leaving the sector in a morass of confusing departmental accountabilities and regulatory complexity. As a result, since 2002 production in Canada's aquaculture has stagnated, with an average annual growth rate of about 1% from 2002 to 2019. Other nations, recognizing the opportunity, have moved quickly ahead. *Over the same time period our share of world aquaculture production has fallen by 54%.*

In 2019, aquaculture generated \$5.2 billion in total economic activity across the Canadian economy, \$2.1 billion in GDP, and over 21,300 full-time jobs for Canadians. Already over 250 Indigenous communities across Canada (AFN data) are engaged in aquaculture development and many other communities have the bio-physical capacity and interest to support farmed seafood development. The potential for future growth in the sector is strong, as noted in numerous reports produced under your government:



“The central message of this report is that there is an ocean of opportunities for aquaculture in Canada. Our country has the world’s longest marine coastline, the largest number of freshwater lakes, a diversified aquaculture industry, a rigorous regulatory regime and world-class aquaculture-related research. Canada is, therefore, well positioned to help supply the growing global demand for fish and seafood and to do so sustainably – environmentally, economically and socially. The Committee supports the goal of doubling Canadian aquaculture production within the next decade.”

(Senate Report on Aquaculture: “An Ocean of Opportunities,” 2016)

“What would Canadian leadership in global food production look like?...Increase global market share (for aquaculture) to 0.6% (from 0.2%) and exports by almost US \$2.6B. Do so by adopting...an economic development strategy that reforms ill-adapted traditional fisheries regulations for this emerging subsector to create opportunities for provincial, regional and aboriginal stakeholders...”

(Advisory Council on Economic Growth “Barton Report”, Feb 2017, pp.10,12)

“Achieving our growth targets hinges on all sectors meeting their full potential. Right now this is not always the case. A key example is the Canadian aquaculture sector, which has the potential to nearly double production from 200,565 tonnes in 2016 to 381,900 tonnes in 2028 to meet rising demand. However, there are significant barriers to achieving this growth:

- *There is not a strong economic development focus for this sector within the federal government*
- *Licensing requirements do not facilitate long-term growth strategies...”*

*(Agri-Food Economic Report from Canada's Economic Strategy Tables:
The Innovation and Competitiveness Imperative, 2018)*

“The largest potential (carbon reduction) gains for food production lie in the sustainable expansion of marine aquaculture.”

(Expert Paper for the High Level Panel for a Sustainable Ocean Economy, 2019)

Recent studies have shown that the farm-raised salmon sector is poised to deliver on the promise of significant growth, with plans to invest more than \$1.4 billion in BC over the next 30 years to increase production by 85,000 tonnes (95%), and more than \$800 million in Atlantic Canada, which would grow production in that region by some by 65,000 tonnes (128%). These investments would eventually *generate an additional \$4.9 billion in economic output per year, \$1.86 billion in additional GDP per year, and more than 19,800 new jobs*, mainly in rural and remote coastal communities across Canada.

Unfortunately, Minister Jordan’s recent decision on the Discovery Islands will close more than 24% of BC’s farmed salmon production, resulting in the loss of more than 1,500 jobs across BC and requiring the destruction of more than 10 million fish. The decision has also forced BC salmon farming companies to put future investment plans on hold.



Despite this major setback, we believe your government still has the opportunity to get back on track and support smart development of our sector as a key part of Canada's COVID recovery strategy. We ask you to identify a champion department, and for this department to develop a plan for the sustainable growth of the sector.

We ask for your government's support in enabling our sector to help Canada build back better.

Sincerely,

Timothy J. Kennedy
President & CEO
Canadian Aquaculture Industry Alliance

CC:

Hon. Bernadette Jordan, PC, MP, Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard
Hon. Chrystia Freeland, PC, MP, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance
Hon. Dominic LeBlanc, President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs
Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson, PC, MP, Minister of Environment and Climate Change Canada
Hon. Mélanie Joly, Minister of Economic Development and Official Languages
Hon. François-Philippe Champagne, PC, MP, Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry
Hon. Marie Claude Bibeau, PC, MP, Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food
Hon. Carolyn Bennett, PC, MP, Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations
Hon. Mary Ng, Minister of Small Business, Export Promotion and International Trade
Hon. Carla Qualtrough, PC, MP, Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion

Other Key Federal Ministers and Parliamentary Secretaries engaged with the Blue Economy Strategy

Premiers and Lead Ministers for NL, NS, NB, PEI, QC, ON, BC
Mr. Erin O'Toole, PC, MP, Leader of the Official Opposition
Mr. Richard Bragdon, MP, Critic to the Minister of Fisheries & Oceans
Mr. Pierre Poilievre, MP, Critic to the Minister of Finance
Mr. Jagmeet Singh, Leader of the New Democratic Party