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MHC Release
For Immediate Release
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Marine Harvest Canada Responds To Pacific Salmon Forum's Final Report

Marine Harvest Canada (MHC), the largest aquaculture company in British Columbia, has now reviewed the Final Report and Recommendations submitted by the BC Pacific Salmon Forum.

MHC has been supportive of the Forum appointed by the province to examine the issues surrounding the farmed and wild salmon resource in British Columbia and has actively participated in key research that has added to its body of knowledge.

We are pleased that the Forum sees "a future where salmon farming is viewed as an important economic driver and a legitimate user of the marine environment that is compatible with healthy wild salmon populations". We are also heartened that the Forum recognizes that "significant improvement" in BC's regulatory regime for salmon aquaculture has occurred in recent years and we have demonstrated successful adaptive management to these changes.

The report correctly identifies that wild salmon in BC "are under pressure from multiple human activities" including (in no particular order); urbanization, forestry, tourism, salmon farming, mining, hatcheries, habitat loss, power developments, coal bed methane exploration, gravel extraction, and over fishing. MHC acknowledges our shared responsibility to minimize and eliminate risks to wild salmon and the BC watersheds that support them.

We are pleased that the report finds sea lice levels found on wild juvenile salmon in the Broughton region are presently at or below natural levels found elsewhere on our coast. The Forum clearly recognizes MHC's work on a coordinated area management plan (C.A.M.P.) to address this concern through a strict management regime which also includes timing of fish entry and harvest, single year class farms and timed medicinal treatments prior to the out-migration of juvenile wild salmon in March of each year.

We are in agreement with the recommendation for research into lice control options that will lead to better protection of our farmed salmon from sea lice infections originating from wild sources.

We support the recommendation for research into "improved technologies" to further reduce risk to the environment. The Forum correctly notes that closed containment may not be a viable way to grow salmon due to some major challenges including CO2 build up, waste management, economics and energy requirements and we applaud the Forum for recognizing a "high degree of misinformation about closed containment". Regardless, MHC has been involved in this type of research and is committed to future research to improve technologies that may reduce or eliminate environmental impacts.

However, the global demand for healthy proteins such as farm-raised salmon is increasing each year so we strongly disagree with the Forum's recommendation of production limits. MHC believes that BC should share in this economic growth. We call for a performance based approach that will reward producers demonstrating successful sea lice management with an opportunity to maintain moderate growth of their operations.

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This Report provides recommendations specific to our business that may further the sustainability of our operations and we look forward to continued work and collaboration with local communities, other marine user groups, First Nations, scientific researchers, environmental organizations and government regulators to achieve this.

Marine Harvest Canada is the largest salmon farming company in British Columbia. Based in Campbell River, it employs 500 staff that raise and process 40,000 tonnes of fresh salmon annually.

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