



Ottawa, Canada K1A 0E6

OCT 05 2016

Ms. Alexandra Morton
< alexandramorton5@gmail.com >

Dear Ms. Morton:

Thank you for your letter of August 16, 2016, regarding the infectious salmon anemia virus (ISAV). I regret the delay in responding.

I understand and appreciate your deep concern for British Columbia's aquatic environment. Once again, I assure you that there are stringent federal regulations in place to protect Canada's aquatic species (farmed and wild) from diseases of regional, national and global concern. The Government of Canada regularly monitors wild Pacific salmon populations and farmed stocks for a range of diseases, in addition to conducting research. No Pacific or farmed salmon on the West Coast have tested positive for the detection of ISAV by tests validated to international standards.

I would like to clarify your assertion that Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) staff findings support that Infectious Salmon Anemia is present in British Columbia. I believe you are referring to Dr. Miller-Saunders' research that specifically focused on the virus and was presented at the Cohen Commission of Inquiry. Dr. Miller-Saunders runs a research laboratory rather than an accredited diagnostic laboratory, and the findings of that research were subsequently determined to be negative by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA). Through discussions with the CFIA, the methodology used by Dr. Miller-Saunders has since been refined to improve the program's detection accuracy. Using the refined criteria, Dr. Miller-Saunders has not submitted any suspicious detections to date.

I have attached an appendix that outlines the considerable effort and resources that DFO devotes to understanding the risks to wild salmon posed by pathogen transfer.

While my schedule does not allow time for me to meet with you, I note that DFO science staff met with you in 2015 to discuss your concerns and to clarify their findings on this virus.

Again, I assure you that I and the Department take very seriously any reports of disease that may impact the health of salmon in British Columbia. Thank you for writing.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D. LeBlanc'.

Dominic LeBlanc, P.C., M.P.
Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard

Attachment

APPENDIX

To date, Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO), the Canadian Food Inspection Agency and the United States government have tested over 13,000 wild and farmed salmon for the presence of the infectious salmon anemia virus (ISAV), and no fish have tested positive. The results of this testing are available online:

- Status Update on the Surveillance of Wild Anadromous Salmonids in British Columbia;
- DFO Fish Health Audit and Surveillance Summary by facility; and
- U.S. Response to a Report of Infectious Salmon Anemia.

Recently, within Dr. Miller-Saunders' program, DFO has applied molecular assays for 45 potential salmon pathogens (including two assays to ISAV) to more than 500 hearts from farmed British Columbia salmon (collected from 2013-2014), and did not detect any reportable pathogens—including ISAV—in these salmon. The Strategic Salmon Health Initiative will continue to assess these same 45 potential pathogens across 26,000 wild, enhancement hatchery, and aquaculture salmon over the next two years, and will also follow up on any detection of reportable pathogens or microbes not previously known to exist in British Columbia.

Through the Program for Aquaculture Regulatory Research and the Aquaculture Collaborative Research and Development Program, teams of salmon ecologists, fish health experts and oceanographers continue to study the interactions of wild Pacific salmon with finfish farms. A formal risk assessment of pathogen transmission between farmed and wild salmon is underway, which includes an open and transparent scientific peer review process.

Through the Fish Health Audit and Surveillance Program, DFO staff monitor the aquaculture industry in British Columbia to verify and enforce compliance with conditions of licence and all regulations. DFO fish health specialists and veterinarians conduct more than 120 fish health and sea lice audits each year on net pen salmon farms operating in British Columbia with diagnostic services provided by an accredited animal health laboratory.

As well, Aquaculture Environmental Operations biologists, who are designated fishery guardians, conduct regular inspections and monitoring of licence conditions. As part of the federal conditions of licence, salmon-rearing facilities in British Columbia are required to regularly monitor fish health and immediately report unusual mortality events to the Department, which DFO fish health specialists track and investigate as required. Additional information about fish health management in the Pacific Region is available on DFO's website.