

R: Jobs>Environment?" by Glen Whiffen, The Telegram, 2 Apr 2019

Environment + Jobs = Aquaculture.

I recently read an article titled "Jobs>Environment?" by Glen Whiffen, dated 2 Apr 2019. I was floored by the negative slant that the reporter chose to take related to this particular topic.

In his opening paragraph, he clearly suggests to the reading audience that there is a high level of "dissent and unease" for aquaculture expansion in this province.

That is simply not true. An independent and objective public reporting poll commissioned by NAIA and conducted by MQO Research in 2018 clearly indicated that there is only a small handful of opponents (~14%) to farming our ocean in Newfoundland and Labrador. More positively, in fact the majority of people in this province and throughout Atlantic Canada DO support farming seafood.

In the same opening sentence, he refers to an "unstoppable push" for a \$250-million expansion proposed for the Burin Peninsula. I ask the author to whom he refers to as the unstoppable pusher?

As the Executive Director of the Newfoundland Aquaculture Industry Association (NAIA), I am intimately involved in all aspects of the growing seafood farming industry in this province most of my waking hour and I can assure you, Mr. Whiffen and your readers, that sometimes it feels as though we are pushing sand to build the industry due to well-funded lobby efforts beyond the borders of our province.

In this province, we have some of the most stringent regulatory regimes and frameworks in the country. As an industry, we believe in a regulatory framework that is based on science, developed in partnership with key stakeholders and creates a business-friendly environment that enables sustainable growth of our environmentally friendly and renewable industry.

Through 'The Way Forward' and the Aquaculture Sector Workplan, we have been collaborating closely with key stakeholders including First Nations, federal and provincial governments, communities, businesses and residents to develop partnerships and relationships. This enables environmentally responsible and sustainable industry growth that benefits communities and its people, and generates renewable wealth for our province.

The Aquaculture Sector Workplan is available online.

<https://www.flr.gov.nl.ca/aquaculturesummit/pdf/Sector-Workplan-Online.pdf>

From a regulatory perspective, I strongly agree with Minister Letto that there is, in place, a rigorous evaluation process that is required for governmental approvals and reviews such as those from: Transport Canada; Canadian Food Inspection Agency; Canadian Environment Assessment Agency; Environment Canada; Department of Fisheries and Oceans; Municipal Affairs and Environment; Health Canada; Department of Fisheries and Land Resources; Crown Lands; among others.

I would argue that aquaculture is the most transparent farming industry on the planet. Transparency and traceability are two pillars of our business that we embrace and incorporate in everything we do.

Our primary motive is to farm healthy premium seafood here at home in Newfoundland and Labrador, from egg to plate to be destined for restaurants and homes around the world.

We create jobs and wealth in rural coastal communities in Newfoundland and Labrador. As Mayor Steve Crewe of Hermitage-Sandyville recently said, *“Aquaculture is the best news story outside the overpass”*. Guy Herritt, a local resident, describes our industry as a *“God Send”*. Their words, not mine.

We are proud farmers, like our agriculture sector. We farm our oceans with care in every aspect of our business. The environment means everything to us, as farmers and as conservationists.

Scientifically, farming our oceans, whether it be salmon, mussels, trout, oysters, urchins, seaweed or Atlantic cod, is no doubt the most environmentally efficient and friendly way to farm protein on the planet. This is true in terms of land usage, water consumption and Green House Gas Emissions (GHG). We need to farm food to feed a growing global population. Dr Steve Gaines, Dean of Environmental Science at the University of California has a great Ted Talk on the Future of Food - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0KDsla6-NVA>.

Our work force is comprised of proud, hard-working people from the communities in which we operate. We are fishers, biologists, engineers, technicians, accountants, processors...and we are farmers, first and foremost!

Our industry has been the catalyst for revitalizing rural coastal communities for decades. If you don't believe me, poll the people of the South Coast, Green Bay or the Burin Peninsula. Ask the residents and business owners of areas where we operate what aquaculture means to their family's livelihood and their community.

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