



December 16, 2024

Statement from the Board of the Newfoundland Aquaculture Industry Association

HERMITAGE, NL - On behalf of our member companies and everyone working in aquaculture in Newfoundland and Labrador, we are grateful that Premier Andrew Furey, Minister Elvis Loveless, Mayor Steve Crewe and Member of Parliament Clifford Small are standing up for the people and communities they represent. By opposing Ottawa's proposed south coast National Marine Protected Area (NMCA) boundary, these representatives are ensuring that no one in the fishing and aquaculture industries and the livelihoods of families who rely on these industries are negatively impacted.

Charting the best course for our marine environment should not come at the expense of the seafood industry and the livelihoods it supports; it doesn't have to. Environmental activists have attempted to sell coastal communities on the promise of potential activity with National Marine Conservation Areas and Marine Protected Areas they cannot guarantee. Meanwhile, the seafood sector already brings people to the rural coastal communities where operations employ people regularly and year-round.

Activists embedded within Parks Canada by the federal government are pushing this south coast NMCA to be established first and are telling communities they will develop a site management plan impacting fishing, aquaculture and recreational activities afterwards. Parks Canada has admitted that some ocean areas will have restricted fishing activities. The fact is that the NMCA in Gwaii Haanas, British Columbia, has restricted fishing in nearly half of the ocean area and completely restricted all commercial aquaculture.

It's clear that Ottawa, Parks Canada, and DFO, are being lobbied by activists including the Atlantic Salmon Federation, the Ecology Action Centre, and others who are willing to jeopardize local food security and employment by destabilizing economic opportunity to attract funding donors.

The Atlantic Salmon Federation is far from Atlantic Canadian – its major donors are wealthy Americans living in big US cities. ASF hosts lavish New York City events and invests millions in political lobbying and sensational campaigns claiming the need for funds for wild salmon conservation projects.

Charity Intelligence Canada*, a national organization that assists the charitable sector in being more transparent, reports that in 2023 ASF Canada took in \$2.8 million in "International donations" from the US while only \$830,000 came from Canadian donors. ASF's 2023 Impact Report lists Yvon Chouinard, the founder of Patagonia clothing, as a "platinum benefactor" donor of more than \$100,000. Chouinard also happens to be an investor in Nova Scotia land-based salmon tank farming company Sustainable Blue. The American chapter of ASF is sliding US funds across the border to influence Ottawa politicians

and negatively impact Newfoundland and Atlantic Canadian jobs and communities where ocean salmon farming has existed for decades.

Sadly, the Atlantic Salmon Federation Canada's 2023 financial statement of operations** reveals that they spent a mere \$258,000 on "wild salmon watersheds" in all of Canada. When ASF was asked last week for a list and expense amount of their 2023 research and conservation programs in each Atlantic Canadian province, ASF refused to provide details. The reality is that they are fundraising off the backs of hard-working Atlantic Canadians in the seafood industry while spending very little on actual wild salmon conservation projects in Newfoundland and Atlantic Canada.

Provincial and federal governments should end all grant funding to the Atlantic Salmon Federation. ASF Canada received \$687,000 in government funding representing 21% of total revenues in 2023, while the NGO sits on \$5.7 million in reserve funds. The federal government must immediately suspend the charitable status of ASF and end its support of ASF's campaign against Newfoundland food security through local salmon farming production.

Non-governmental organizations of this devious nature who claim to be charities should be legally bound to function independently of any government and should not receive government grants from taxpayers' money. There is nothing charitable about the dishonest, outdated, inaccurate claims ASF continues to promote about the aquaculture industry. ASF donors should also be asking critical questions about how their funds are being used.

The fact is that ocean salmon farming is the most environmentally sustainable form of animal protein farming in the world, with the lowest carbon footprint. Time and time again, science has shown that aquaculture does not negatively impact lobster and has a minimal impact on wild salmon and other species.

We are appreciative that our local Newfoundland and Labrador elected representatives follow fact and science. Protecting our oceans should be the common ground on which the industry, government and environmental NGOs agrees and aligns. It is shameful that ASF and others continue to conduct misinformation campaigns, which muddy the dialogue to mislead stakeholders, influence politicians, and ultimately attract the donations they rely on to fund their egregious campaigns.

The Newfoundland and Labrador Aquaculture Industry Association (NAIA) is a member-based organization that represents the interests of seafood farmers and their suppliers in Newfoundland and Labrador. We are passionate advocates on behalf of our members to facilitate and promote the responsible development of the aquaculture industry. <https://naia.ca/>

* <https://www.charityintelligence.ca/charity-details/272-atlantic-salmon-federation>

** <https://www.asf.ca/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/2023-09-30-ASF-Canada-Final-FS.pdf>