

Resolution Opposing Open Water Aquaculture Facilities in the Great Lakes

Whereas there exist a wide range of aquaculture facilities in the Great Lakes- St. Lawrence River basin including: open water, caged, pond, flow through raceways or tanks, closed re-circulation tanks and other facilities; and

Whereas large-scale escapes from open water aquaculture facilities in the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River raise serious ecological concerns about displacing established fish populations, disrupting the closely managed predator-prey balance and undermining the genetic integrity of established fish through interbreeding and introducing or incubating disease; and

Whereas open water aquaculture facilities disrupts the local ecosystem and precludes the traditional use of the natural resource; and

Whereas a net pen escape in Lake Ontario released more rainbow trout than the Province of Ontario stocks in a year (approximately 360,000 yearlings escaped after a 1997 storm event versus about 225,900 rainbow trout stocked in the same year); and

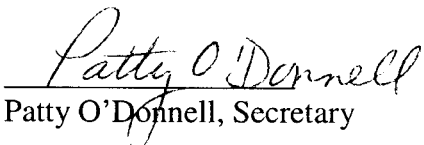
Whereas without improvements to open water facilities to prevent large-scale escapes, further growth of open water aquaculture only increases chances of large-scale escapes and subsequent ecological impacts; and

Whereas in the mid-1990s, large-scale algal growth and depletion of dissolved oxygen caused by open water caged aquaculture was reported in the LaCloche Channel of Lake Huron. Water quality impacts included significant phosphorous loading almost double than targets set for total phosphorus loading reduction from nearby Severn Sound Area of Concern's Penetang Bay; and

Whereas the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources is currently processing an application for what will be the largest aquaculture operation on Lake Huron and once this facility begins operation fish production in tonnage from cage culture could soon surpass that of the commercial fishery.

Therefore be it resolved that Great Lakes United support a moratorium on new open water aquaculture facilities until a proven method for environmental assessment can be used to critically examine the suitability and placement of new facilities and during permit reviews in the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River.

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS IS A TRUE COPY OF A RESOLUTION ADOPTED AT THE NINETEENTH ANNUAL MEETING OF GREAT LAKES UNITED ON JUNE 10, 2001.


Patty O'Donnell, Secretary