



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

PUBLIC PETITION NO.

PE01715

Name of petitioner

Mark Carter on behalf of Marine Concern

Petition title

Closed-Containment for Salmon Farms in Scotland

Petition summary

Calling on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to ensure that the salmon farming industry solely utilises a closed-containment method with full water filtering in Scottish waters.

Action taken to resolve issues of concern before submitting the petition

Marine Concern and previously Hebridean Partnership has contributed in depth at local and national meetings and forums, including engaging with two salmon farming companies, NGOs, Scottish Natural Heritage, Marine Scotland and politicians.

Petition background information

The Scottish economy benefits from the income generated from salmon farming. However, we consider that currently the industry does a disproportionate amount of environmental harm with impunity. Much of the industry is subject to self-regulation in an environment where self-regulation is known not to work. Independent scrutiny is almost non-existent and is ineffective. Multinational companies make huge profits, often using the cheapest method of production, for example using bullets to shoot seals rather than non-lethal anti predator controls. Salmon farming has collapsed in several countries around the world, the multinational companies move on and apply the same failing techniques of profit over the environment. The salmon industry in Scotland could be the next to fail, especially if proposed expansion fails to address existing issues.

Mechanisation has reduced the potential benefits for high employment in remote rural areas and at least one Scottish Government Minister wants to double production from salmon farms. But without environmental consideration this could cause catastrophic effects on both the industry, other industries and activities that rely on Scotland's near pristine waters and Scotland's unique marine ecology.

We would like to see the Scottish Government legislate for all salmon farms in Scotland to be closed-containment, i.e using a physical waterproof membrane between farmed salmon and the open sea, including a pumping or filtering system that prevents direct

flow back into the sea or are land-based with similar filtering systems, then many of the adverse environmental factors could be eliminated. This is not to be confused with Recirculating Aquaculture Systems (RAS) but full filtering of seawater.

This would potentially allow the salmon farming industry in Scotland to increase without placing an additional burden on the Scottish marine environment upon which so many other industries, including tourism and fisheries, rely. If done correctly with independent supervision it has the potential to eliminate the shooting of seals, end harming cetaceans from acoustic deterrents and have a dramatic reduction in sea lice issues. Mass infections of wild salmonids and escape of farmed fish could be reduced or eliminated, vastly reducing potential gene pollution and probably lead to less chemical treatments and medicines being required. Waste products could be recycled creating additional income and employment.

To date the industry has thwarted any concept of closed containment, citing cost as the major issue. If government were to insist on closed containment and encouraged the salmon industry to embrace its responsibilities in lessening their adverse environmental impact it would become cost effective, ensuring the sustainability of the industry and our environment.

This year has seen the results of two published reports; firstly the 'The Environmental Impacts of Salmon Farming' by the Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform Committee (ECCLR), and secondly, 'Salmon farming in Scotland' undertaken by the Rural Economy and Connectivity Committee (RECC). The findings of these reports highlight many of the issues currently facing the salmon industry in Scotland and we understand that salmon farming will be debated in the Scottish Parliament in 2019.

Unique web address

<https://www.parliament.scot/GettingInvolved/Petitions/PE01715>

Related information for petition

Further information and references can be found at the Marine Concern website.

Do you wish your petition to be hosted on the Parliament's website to collect signatures online?

YES

How many signatures have you collected so far?

0

Closing date for collecting signatures online

23 / 01 / 2019

Comments to stimulate online discussion

We believe that if the industry is to grow it must act more responsibly and embrace closed containment. Do you agree that the only way this is going to occur in Scotland is if the Scottish Government acts and ensures compliance?

What are your views on the industry's argument that this method is too expensive?

Why do you think that the relevant agencies in Scotland and the Scottish Government don't appear to want or insist that for sustainability it is used?

This is the time to have your say, exert your influence and encourage for a more sustainable salmon farming industry in Scotland. We would welcome any other thoughts you have on this issue.