

1 Resolution Supporting a Phase Out & Ban of Non-native Finfish
2 Aquaculture in the Marine Waters of Washington State
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4 WHEREAS, on August 19, 2017 an aquaculture operation managed by Cooke Inc. off the coast of
5 Cypress Island in Skagit County, WA containing 305,000 farmed Atlantic Salmon failed and
6 released tens of thousands of fish into the Salish Sea.
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8 WHEREAS, the Lummi Nation declared a state of emergency on August 24, 2017, deployed an
9 Emergency Response Team, and caught over 43,000 Atlantic Salmon.
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11 WHEREAS, state agencies, as directed by Governor Inslee on August 26, temporarily halted
12 permits for Atlantic Salmon net pens and urged the public to catch as many of the escaped
13 Atlantic Salmon and report the locations of their capture.
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15 WHEREAS, Cooke Inc. assured the public that escaped fish would not survive and native fish
16 were not at risk.
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18 WHEREAS, Atlantic Salmon were still being caught in the Skagit River on December 1, 2017 –
19 three months after the failure.
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21 WHEREAS, numerous studies show the adverse impacts of Atlantic Salmon escapements in the
22 marine and freshwater ecosystems, such as:

- 23 • Bisson 2006: Evidence of continual, unreported Atlantic escapes from the industry in
24 Puget Sound.
- 25 • Fisher 2014: Atlantic salmon prevalence and occupancy in Canadian Pacific rivers.
- 26 • Morton 2017: Evidence of higher disease rates (PRV) in Atlantic salmon migrating
27 through net pen waters.
- 28 • Morton, Volpe 2002: Description of farmed salmon captures in 2002.
- 29 • Naylor 2005: Overview risks of escaped farmed salmon.
- 30 • Volpe 2000: Evidence of reproduction in BC rivers.
- 31 • Volpe 2001: Competition study between juvenile Atlantics and natives, quote 'Recent
32 evidence suggests that this species is now naturally reproducing in Vancouver Island
33 rivers' and 'we suggest that Atlantic salmon may be capable of colonizing and persisting
34 in coastal British Columbia river systems that are underutilized by native species, such as
35 steelhead.'
36

37 WHEREAS, Washington has a total of 7 active Atlantic Salmon operations in the Salish Sea
38 (formerly 8 with the Port Angeles net pen which was recently shut down by Department of
39 Natural Resources for aquatic land lease violations). British Columbia has about 70 operations --
40 both native and nonnative finfish aquaculture -- at least a dozen of which are Atlantic Salmon.
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42 WHEREAS, California and Alaska have banned Atlantic Salmon aquaculture operations in open
43 marine waters and Oregon doesn't have any.
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45 WHEREAS, the Whatcom County Democrats' platform makes the following values & policy
46 statements regarding the environment and Tribal relations:

- 47 • Health of the physical environment directly impacts the short-term and long-term health
48 of our citizens, communities, economy, and wildlife, and must be protected.
- 49 • Preservation of biological diversity, including endangered and threatened species, and
50 restoration of previously extirpated species.
- 51 • Washington State, British Columbia: Clean up the Salish Sea and waters emptying into it,
52 and enact new laws or regulations as needed to eliminate pollution at the source.
- 53 • Washington State, Federal Government, Whatcom County: Protect our critical
54 environmental areas, including wilderness areas, old growth forests, wildlife habitat areas
55 and corridor, wetlands, streams, the Columbia River, Salish Sea, coastlines, and Pacific
56 Ocean, through vigilant monitoring and planned growth management.
- 57 • Concerted efforts to maintain and protect traditional species of marine, animal, and plant
58 life that are critical to Native American cultures and economies.
- 59 • Federal government, Washington State, Whatcom County: Fully respect Lummi and
60 Nooksack treaty rights against interference, including traditional fishing rights and
61 sacred burial grounds.

62

63 THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that we, the Whatcom Democrats, ask the Washington State
64 Legislature to pass legislation before March 8, 2018 that accomplishes the following:

- 65 • Improve oversight, monitoring, and enforcement amongst the Washington state
66 Departments of Natural Resources (DNR), Fish & Wildlife (DFW), and Ecology (DOE) for
67 the remaining net pen operations in the Puget Sound until their aquatic land leases
68 expire.
- 69 • Phase out existing aquatic lands leases and prohibit their renewal in the marine waters of
70 Washington State.
- 71 • Direct the state to ban future non-native finfish aquaculture leases in open marine
72 waters.

73

74 THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we, the Whatcom Democrats, ask the elected bodies
75 of Whatcom County, the Port of Bellingham, and cities of Blaine, Bellingham, and Ferndale to
76 contact our 40th and 42nd Legislative District Senators and Representatives to urge them to
77 pass legislation as outlined above.

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79 *Adopted by unanimous vote of Whatcom County Democrats at their January 18, 2018 monthly*
80 *meeting of the membership.*