

BRIEFING TO AVICC EXECUTIVE

March 4th, 2020.

From: Daniel Arbour, AVICC AMAC & IMAB Area-Based Management sub-committee representative.

cc. Josie Osbourne, AVICC IMAB representative.

RE: Updates on DFO Indigenous and Multi-stakeholder Advisory Body on Aquaculture (IMAB), and on the Aquaculture Management Advisory Committee (AMAC).

Dear AVICC representatives,

Over the last number of months much work has been done with the Department of Fisheries and Oceans that should prove consequential to the future of aquaculture in Coastal British Columbia. In context this work is happening at a time where the DFO Minister's mandate includes rolling out a new Aquaculture Act for Canada, which will serve as a blueprint for the sector's growth and legal framework for decades to come.

I have very much enjoyed participating in the two committees as an appointee of AVICC. While IMAB is a temporary process focused on policy level changes to address ongoing issues and opportunities in the sector, particularly focused on fish farms, the shellfish AMAC is a more permanent table focused on shellfish operations, regulations, and more immediate problems.

IMAB Update

The IMAB was created by the previous DFO minister to address long standing issues with aquaculture and its impacts. Three technical committees were established in August 2019 and will conclude their work this month. I am attaching the DFO PowerPoint which gives detailed updates on the work of each committee. In summary:

- The Alternative Production Technologies committee focused on methods to reduce harm and negative impacts of fish farms. The committee reviewed various advances focused on fish farms and was somewhat embroiled in the government's election announcement of a move away from open-net farming. However, some in-depth conversations advanced regarding how to deal with fish farm waste; how to improve the regulatory regime and establish stronger performance standards; and how to build collaborations and sharing of information.

- The Fish Health committee was charged with undertaking a review of existing marine finfish aquaculture fish health management regimes internationally; and reviewed scientific information about fish farm impacts both for farmed and wild stock. The group had many disagreements on the nature and validity of different research and studies. At least one group member broke out and will write her own report.
- The Area-Based Management group, which I was part of, was essentially charged with investigating the potential for a new policy regime on the West Coast that would be similar to ecosystem-based management. The group was charged with developing a recommendation for a shared definition/vision for Area-based management. Over the last months the group has had a strong consensus on what this could look like, and later in March we will finalize our set of recommendations to DFO for proposed implementation.

Once the groups work is complete, the overseeing IMAB Committee will present a report to the Minister for consideration. While some of the process was challenging, my sense is that the sum of these efforts certainly indicates new paradigms that are given consideration, and which will likely feed into the development of the Aquaculture Act in future processes. This last point is my own assessment.

AMAC Update

The Shellfish AMAC permanent committee meets twice per year. At our last meeting in November all agreed to address the issue of aquaculture marine debris. The Province presented on their current enforcement issues. Traceability was also high on the agenda with reports of streams of illegal clams reaching markets in North America. DFO stated that this is an extremely important issue to address and will be prioritized. A brief announcement was also made that Styrofoam is now considered non-compliant with DFO regulations. There was some discussion as to what that would mean in the short term.

At our next meeting in April, I expect that we will continue to delve into these two issues, in addition to discussing new science around shellfish risks and opportunities. I will send you a brief update following that meeting. Don't hesitate if you have further questions on any of the above until then.

Best and thanks for your work on the executive,

Daniel Arbour

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