

June 11, 2002

Dear Sirs,

I respectfully offer the following comments to your Commission on the status and potential of Marine Aquaculture in US waters. My credentials for venturing these thoughts include 36 years work in the aquaculture industry, both in Europe and the U.S., and extensive involvement with aquaculture businesses in many other countries.

- Aquaculture is the business of growing food in water: in order to grow a lot of it there is a need for a lot of water. The oceans contain 97% of the earth's water and cover two thirds of its surface. I think that we should use this resource more fully to supply our future seafood needs.
- The US presently imports over \$10 billion of seafood per year, much of it produced by aquaculture, e.g. shrimp, salmon and tilapia. In 2001 we imported 556 million pounds of farmed salmon alone.
- Some forms of aquaculture, notably salmon farming, have inspired vigorous opposition and claims of lack of sustainability. However, I think critics fail to understand that marine aquaculture today is a 'work in progress'. If it is allowed to progress it can supply our seafood needs indefinitely.
- Today, almost every maritime nation on earth has an active marine aquaculture program. The concept is embraced by the European Union and countries such as Australia, Chile and Norway. By comparison, the United States lags well behind.
- There are many reasons for this but, primarily, it is due to lack of perceived need, compounded by a cumbersome permitting system that discourages investment.
- The most important things your commission could do to help marine aquaculture in the U.S. would be to recognize its importance for the security of our future seafood supply and to recommend a simplified permitting system.

Marine aquaculture is a legitimate and necessary use of our ocean waters. Please say so in your recommendations to the President and to Congress.

I would be pleased to provide more information and references if these would be helpful.

Thank you for your attention.

Sincerely,

John Forster
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