

John F. Robins, Secretary, Save Our Seals Fund (SOSF),
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To Fergus Ewing MSP, Cabinet Secretary with responsibility for Aquaculture &
Roseanna Cunningham MSP, Cabinet Secretary with responsibility for the
Environment and Animal Welfare,
The Scottish Government,
Holyrood,
Edinburgh

Dear Cabinet Secretaries,

Two weeks ago it was revealed that over 10 million salmon died on Scottish fish farms last year due to disease, parasites and other problems. If this had happened in onshore livestock farming there would have been a public outrage.

This morning it has been confirmed that Marine Harvest have lost 125,000 fish at sites on Loch Erisort, Lewis due to *pasteurella skyensis*, a bacterium named after the Isle of Skye where it was first identified. Ironically *pasteurella skyensis* is the most Scottish thing about this disaster as Marine Harvest is a Norwegian company and the salmon most likely raised from fertilised eggs imported from Norway.

As with previous mass mortalities I assume that once again trucks are carrying tonnes of dead, diseased fish to England for destruction as toxic waste. These contaminated convoys cross many rivers with vulnerable populations of native wild salmon on the way to the Widnes incinerator.

Instead of continually kowtowing to the mainly foreign owned salmon farming industry the Scottish Government must address the welfare problems on salmon farms and protect our marine environment and our native salmon and seatrout from this polluting industry. I request that you introduce an immediate moratorium on the proposed massive expansion of salmon farming in Scotland. I ask you to mount an independent public enquiry into the massive problems surrounding this industry with special attention to the welfare of salmon in salmon farms, risks posed to wild salmon and seatrout stocks and the wider damage being done to our coastal and marine environment.

I also urge you to compel salmon farmers to build facilities to deal with their toxic waste on-site instead of transporting it hundreds of miles with the risk of poisoning numerous salmon rivers.

Finally I request that your Government stop blindly promoting salmon farming and instead recognise it for the serious environmental hazard it is. You could start by telling your civil servants and your own speech writers to stop using the word “sustainable” when referring to salmon farms. I can think of many appropriate words to describe floating factory fish farms but sustainable is most definitely not one of them.

Yours sincerely,

John F. Robins,
Save Our Seals Fund