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13<sup>th</sup> February 2019,

**Stakeholder Submission RE: draft Initial Full Assessment Report, Marine Harvest Canada's (Mowi Canada) Shelter Bay farm, by SAI Global, published on the ASC website 23rd January 2019**

Upon review of the draft Aquaculture Stewardship Council (ASC) audit for Marine Harvest Canada's Shelter Bay farm, we find SAI has failed to comply with the ASC Certification and Accreditation Requirements (CAR) and the ASC audit manual for several Salmon Standard indicators.

Our comments and concerns are provided in detail below. We look forward to hearing how SAI will address these outstanding concerns. Furthermore, we ask that our stakeholder submission be included in the final published report.

Sincerely,

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## **Salmon Standard Requirements**

The ASC CAR stipulates Conformity Assessment Bodies (CABs) must conform with the following audit process requirement:

### ***17.3 Audit methodology***

*17.3.1 The ASC audit shall use the ASC Audit Manual as guidance for the standard(s) for which the client is being audited.*

We find the auditor has failed to follow 17.3 for the following Salmon Standard indicators:

#### **I. Indicator 2.2.3 For Jurisdictions that have national or regional coastal water targets...; and Indicator 2.2.4 Evidence of weekly monitoring...**

The draft Shelter Bay farm audit report fails to reference or apply variance 198 to Indicator 2.2.3. VR 198 appropriately states,

***“Chile and Canada are amongst the salmon production regions which do not have such a national classification and therefore they are bound by indicator 2.2.4.” [emphasis added]***

As acknowledged by the variance request, with no national water classification, Canadian farms are required to comply with Indicator 2.2.4. The Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment (CCME) 2012 guidelines for water quality referenced here do not meet the definition of “national or regional water quality targets”. The ASC standard identifies nitrate, phosphorus and chlorophyll A (footnote 16) as the relevant nutrients for water quality targets. CCME guidelines only measure nitrate (as acknowledged in the draft report) and cannot be used as evidence of “national water classification”.

VR 198 was approved by the ASC VR-committee on the 13<sup>th</sup> November 2016. As per the ASC’s variance process, the reapplication of an approved variance occurs when a “certifier encounters an identical situation for which an earlier variance request has been submitted and approved”.<sup>1</sup>

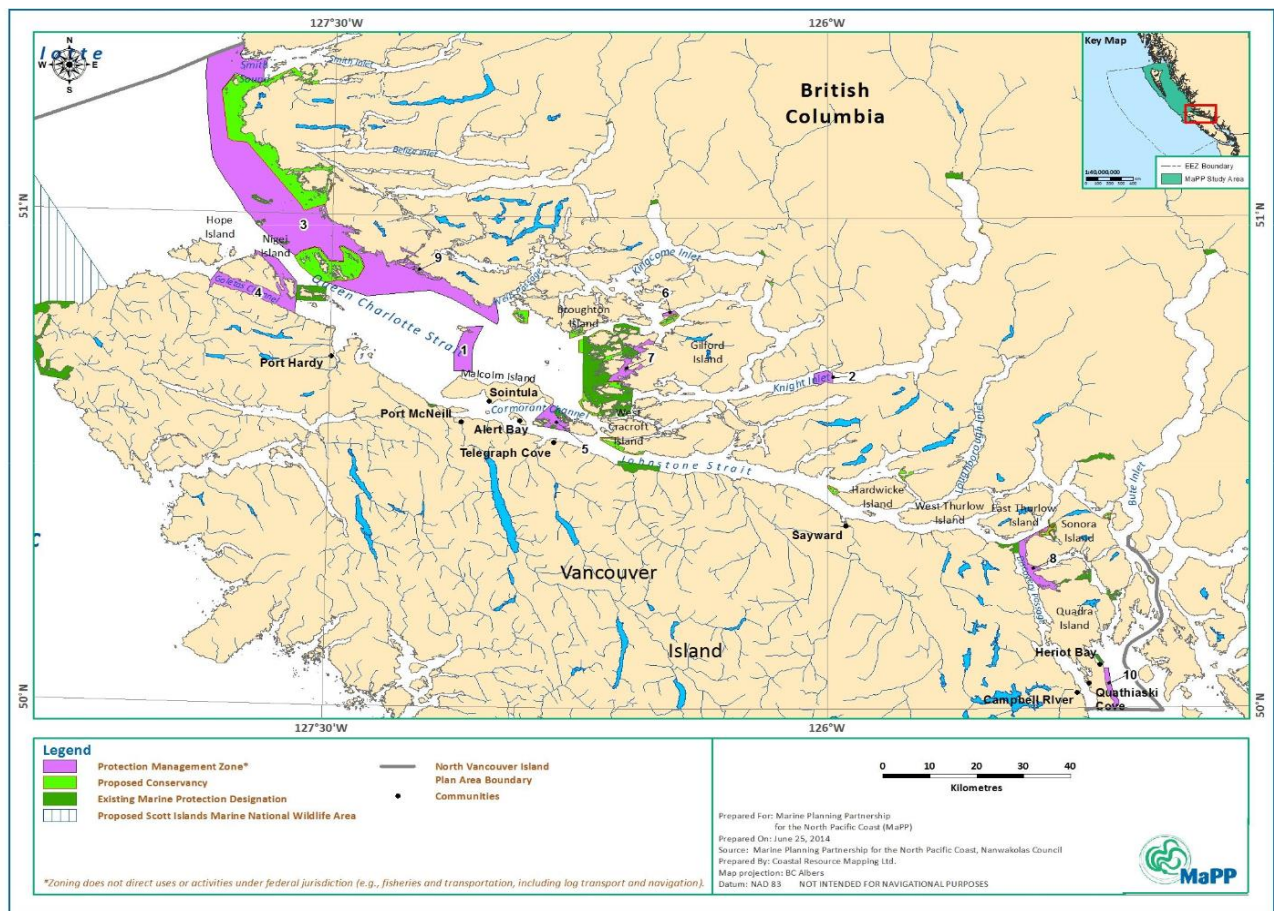
The farm ought to be required to demonstrate compliance with Indicator 2.2.4; or an application should be made to apply the provisions of Variance 198 to this audit.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.asc-aqua.org/what-you-can-do/get-certified/about-our-certification/>

## II. Indicator 2.4.2 Allowance for the farm to be sited in a protected area or High Conservation Value Areas (HCVAs)

The draft audit report incorrectly states Shelter Bay is not located in a HCVA. The Marine Area Planning Partnership's (MaPP) North Vancouver Island Marine Plan<sup>2</sup> specifically identifies the Cape Caution area (PMZ3), for which the Shelter Bay farm resides, as a 'Protection Management Zone' area and describes it as, "Important species and habitats, including those of cultural importance to First Nations; connects existing conservation and protection areas and provides a network/corridor between the Central Coast and North Vancouver Island Marine Plan Areas, which assists in the conservation and protection of habitat and seasonal runs and activities of species with cultural and economic value; includes important areas for Grey Whales, Humpback Whales and northern resident Killer Whales, and herring; includes important habitat for seabirds that breed in adjacent conservation and protection areas."



**PMZ3 – Cape Caution. Source: MaPP.**

<sup>2</sup> [http://mappocean.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/MarinePlan\\_NorthVancouverIsland\\_28072015\\_corrected.pdf](http://mappocean.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/MarinePlan_NorthVancouverIsland_28072015_corrected.pdf)

The ASC audit manual instructs:

*“c. If the farm is sited in a protected area or HCVA, review the scope of applicability of Indicator 2.4.2 (see Instructions above) to determine if your farm is allowed an exception to the requirements. If yes, inform the CAB which exception (#1, #2, or #3) is allowed and provide supporting evidence.”*

Furthermore:

*“Exception #2: For HCVAs if the farm can demonstrate that its environmental impacts are compatible with the conservation objectives of the HCVA designation. The burden of proof would be placed on the farm to demonstrate that it is not negatively impacting the core reason an area has been identified as a HCVA.”*

While the NVIMP grandfathered finfish sites as a conditionally ‘acceptable’ activity within PMZ3 (Cape Caution), the farm should be required to demonstrate “that it is not negatively impacting the core reason an area has been identified as a HCVA”.

**III. Indicator 2.5.7 In the event of a lethal incident, evidence that an assessment of the risk of lethal incident(s) has been undertaken and demonstration of concrete steps taken by the farm to reduce the risk of future incidences**

In 2014, Shelter Bay farm withdrew its initial ASC application following the downing of six sea lions at the farm. Since then, nearby ASC certified farms - Marsh Bay and Doyle Island have also experienced sea lion drownings. These events should require MHC to provide evidence of a risk assessment and concrete steps to avoid future incidences.

**IV. Indicator 3.1.1 Participation in an Area-Based Management scheme.**

The audit report refers to Variance Request 145 for indicator 3.1.1 in aim that MHC can simply defer to current DFO management in the absence of an Area-Based Management (ABM) scheme. The Variance (#145) refers to a different BC salmon farming company, Mitsubishi/Cermaq and their farms located in a different area, Clayoquot Sound. Mitsubishi/Cermaq are the only company in Clayoquot Sound north of Tofino. This is unlike the MHC Discovery Island farms where another company operates (also Mitsubishi/Cermaq), therefore requiring area based coordination beyond company best management practices and DFO management. The variance is also specific to the ABM stocking requirement only.

Consequently, we submit the quoted variance request (145) is not applicable, as per our reasons outlined above.

In addition, we provide evidence in the form of a recent peer review study that shows DFO's management policy to be inadequate for meeting ABM requirements for the application and rotation of treatments.

Appendix II-1 (Application and rotation of treatments) states: "Farmers must be able to demonstrate a coordinated treatment plan and evidence that the schedule and rotation of treatments are being implemented."

Analysis by Bateman et al. (2016)<sup>3</sup> suggest the combination of unusual environmental factors and delayed management action by farms contributed to the factors leading to the 2015 Broughton Archipelago sea louse outbreak. The study found DFO sea lice management policy to be "not sufficient" and instead recommended a cooperative coordinated ABM approach be adopted. Specifically, the study observed a lack of coordination between farms, as demonstrated by the offset treatment schedules at some farms, including those owned by the same company.

Therefore, in the absence of a relevant variance request, and most notably, in the absence of participation in an ABM scheme (as detailed in Appendix II-1), Shelter Pass does not conform to Indicator 3.1.1.

**IV. Indicator 3.2.2 If a non-native species is being produced, evidence of scientific research [41] completed within the past five years that investigates the risk of establishment of the species within the farm's jurisdiction and these results submitted to ASC for review**

The audit report fails to provide "evidence of scientific research completed within the past five years that investigates the risk of establishment". Instead, the auditor notes peer reviewed papers that are more than 5 years old.

In addition, footnote 41 of Indicator 3.2.2, states the following requirement:

*"The research must at a minimum include multi-year monitoring for non-native farmed species, use credible methodologies and analysis, and undergo peer review."*

Specifically, the audit manual's evidence of compliance for 3.2.2C requires CABs to:

*"C. Confirm that the scientific research included: multi-year monitoring for non-native farmed species; used credible methodologies & analyses; and underwent peer review..."*

Wild salmonid monitoring reports do not fulfill this requirement.

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<sup>3</sup> Bateman, A, Peacock, SJ, Connors, B, Polk, Z, Berg, D, Krkošek, M & Morton, A 2016, 'Recent failure to control sea louse outbreaks on salmon in the Broughton Archipelago, British Columbia', *Canadian Journal of Fisheries and Aquatic Sciences*, vol. 73(8), pp.1164-1172.

Furthermore, no such scientific study, as required by the ASC, currently exists for the B.C. region. An independent scientific research study that is multi-year, with credible and appropriate methodology and analyses and underwent peer review should be required for B.C. salmon farmers to demonstrate compliance with Indicator 3.2.2.