



Mr. Erik Solheim, Minister
Ministry of Environment
P.B. 8013 Dep
0030 Oslo - Norway

December 30, 2011

Dear Minister Solheim;

Thank you for your letter of December 12, 2011. We see that your short three-paragraph letter uses the word "dialogue" three times. This makes it abundantly clear that Norway plans to keep reviewing the problem indefinitely. But there is not the slightest suggestion that the Norwegian government recognizes the serious damage its present policies are doing or that it intends to do something about it before it is too late. There never is.

Norway's official policy on the commercial exploitation of salmon stocks is one of delay and evasion. Your letter is just another attempt to justify this policy and continue to implement it. For a country that prides itself on its sensitivity to the environment, this should be viewed as a national disgrace.

I am somewhat heartened to hear that the adverse effects of aquaculture on wild salmon is now "a serious concern". It certainly should be since the obvious outcome of lax aquaculture regulations and ineffectual enforcement is quickly destroying the wild salmon runs in virtually all of Norway's rivers. Yes, we wrote to the Ministry of Fisheries. We were told that the recent disasters in the Trondheim Fjord are matters being handled by the police. It is fruitless to contact your Ministry of Fisheries for information. We have suggested they contact us.

Our friends on the Gaula, Orkla, Namsen, Stjordal and other rivers would be glad to explain how their wild salmon runs are being destroyed by the policies of your government. We also have experts at our disposal who would be glad to suggest some immediate steps the Ministry of Fisheries could take to reduce and even eliminate the threat.

The effect of Norwegian fisheries on salmon of Russian origin is not "new knowledge". It has been well known since the NASCO meeting in Oslo in 1994 that Norway's commercial spring salmon harvest consists mainly of salmon native to Russian rivers.

Over the years the Russian Government has decided to address this concern in a diplomatic manner but that does not give you the right to claim that Norway is exempt from the demands of international law and regulatory discipline. Nor is it fair to abuse Russia's willingness to work towards a solution by continuing and even increasing your country's exploitation of Russian salmon. But that is the precise intention of your new regulatory proposal for 2012. During the last two years, the Russian Minister has sent you friendly warnings but you have failed to react except in a negative way.

Breaking the UN Law of the Sea should not be taken lightly. We will suggest to our partners in Kremlin that the Russian Government place the salmon issue high on the agenda at the next meeting with the Norwegian Government.

Yours sincerely,

Orri Vigfússon

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