



January 9, 2024

To: Hon. Svandís Svavarsdóttir, Iceland Minister of Food, Agriculture, and Fisheries

From: Bill Taylor, President, Atlantic Salmon Federation

Re: Proposed aquaculture legislation (253/2023)

Minister Svavarsdóttir, on behalf of the Atlantic Salmon Federation, I am writing to express concern about the potential expansion of open-net-pen salmon aquaculture in Iceland and your government's proposed legislation, Bill 253/2023.

ASF operates from west Greenland to the Northeast United States. We do large-scale habitat restoration, innovative research, including on the effects of aquaculture, and advocacy on behalf of wild Atlantic salmon and the North Atlantic ecosystem.

While much of our work is focused on North America, we recognize the survival of wild Atlantic salmon is a global responsibility. We see the return of your government to the North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization (NASCO) as an indication that Iceland takes this responsibility seriously.

Unfortunately, countries continue to pursue contradictory goals; conserving wild Atlantic salmon and permitting sea cage salmon aquaculture. In North America, everywhere the industry exists, nearby wild Atlantic salmon populations are assessed as *threatened* or *endangered*. Expansion in Iceland will put your country's wild salmon in similar, grave danger.

Bill 253/2023 proposes to strengthen aspects of aquaculture management, but global experience shows that serious environmental damage will still occur. For example, Norway is credited with having the most stringent aquaculture regulations in the world, yet the Norwegian Scientific Advisory Committee for Atlantic Salmon concluded the industry is the greatest manmade threat to wild salmon.

Therefore, we urge you to address the shortcomings in your proposed legislation that have been identified by the North Atlantic Salmon Fund, a valued partner of ASF.

We urge Iceland could go further and become a global leader in wild Atlantic salmon conservation by preventing further open-net-pen aquaculture expansion and requiring companies to transition from outdated sea-cages to closed-containment growing systems that separate domesticated fish and their deadly diseases and parasites from wild salmon.

Respectfully,

Bill Taylor (rwttaylor@asf.ca)