

## Aquaculture New Zealand Submission on 'Blue Endeavour – Open Ocean Salmon Farming Application'

To the Marlborough District Council

16 December 2019

### **1.0 Introduction**

- 1.1 Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the New Zealand King Salmon consent application, consent reference U190438, to place an open ocean farm, Blue Endeavour, 7km north of Cape Lambert in the Cook Strait.
- 1.2 Aquaculture New Zealand (AQNZ) supports the principles of open ocean aquaculture, noting that it will be a vital and exciting component of New Zealand's future aquaculture, in tandem with growing value from the existing inshore marine farming operations.

### **2.0 Open Ocean Aquaculture in our Strategic Future**

- 2.1 AQNZ represents the interests of the aquaculture sector in New Zealand. This sector has revenues in excess of \$650 million and directly employs more than 3,000 people primarily in regional communities. The Government<sup>1</sup> has identified aquaculture as a key opportunity for regional growth, and that development in the regions is important for social, economic and cultural wellbeing and for the benefit of New Zealand as a whole. In order to progress these opportunities, the Government, through its Aquaculture Strategy<sup>2</sup>, has committed to working alongside the industry to deliver *'economic growth and jobs for the regions as part of an ambitious goal for it to become a \$3 billion industry by 2035.'* As importantly, the strategy is founded on a suite of values (sustainability, productivity, resilience and inclusiveness) that all New Zealanders can be proud of.
- 2.2 We are aligned with the Government in our view that open ocean aquaculture presents a substantial opportunity for New Zealand to grow our aquaculture industry sustainably, and in harmony with community values. *'Both globally and in New Zealand, attention is turning to open ocean farming as the big opportunity for aquaculture growth. Open ocean farming presents an opportunity to farm in cooler, deeper waters, and more easily position farms away from areas of high competing use. New Zealand's exclusive economic zone is 15 times bigger than our land area – presenting significant potential.'*<sup>3</sup>
- 2.3 Maori investment makes up a significant proportion of the current ownership of the industry and their role is expected to grow as aquaculture settlements deliver the equivalence of 20% of any new development to local Iwi. This is a treasured dynamic that is unique to our sector

---

<sup>1</sup> New Zealand Labour Party and New Zealand First (2017). Coalition Agreement

<sup>2</sup> The New Government Aquaculture Strategy

<sup>3</sup> The New Government Aquaculture Strategy

as opportunity is hardwired for Iwi to grow their participation in aquaculture as new developments occur.

- 2.4 Our marine farmers have a strong commitment to the environment and are already world leaders in best practice standards. As an industry we foster a culture of continuous improvement, as demonstrated by numerous individual company initiatives to maintain and restore biodiversity in their local regions. This is demonstrated in the over 90% industry commitment to the industry's A+ Sustainable Management Framework A+ ([www.aplusaquaculture.nz](http://www.aplusaquaculture.nz)), which verifies that our people and our products have the lightest touch on our valued environment.
- 2.5 The aquaculture sector also represents the vanguard for marine biosecurity in New Zealand. We continue to develop our standards and codes of practice to optimise our farming and environmental resilience and at the same time work closely with other marine stakeholders to improve biosecurity efforts around the country. Open Ocean aquaculture will present some new biosecurity challenges and it is anticipated that the Blue Endeavour application will stimulate further evolution of our biosecurity practices.

### **3.0 New Zealand's King Salmon – a Premium Species**

- 3.1 New Zealand's King (Chinook) salmon is a recognised premium species for which we achieve an artisan share of the highest value segments worldwide. Our 'champagne of salmon' is highly regarded for its full flavour and decadent tenderness which has top chefs around the world praising it as the best salmon they've ever eaten. It is also packed full of essential nutrients and has one of the highest natural oil contents of all salmon varieties, making it a quality source of Omega 3s.
- 3.2 The industry has evolved from a group of innovative pioneers, to a professional, specialised and quality food production sector focused on environmental sustainability, food safety and value-added marketing. Our salmon is exported to 30 countries yet is readily available at local supermarkets and restaurants around New Zealand. Half of all salmon farmed in New Zealand is eaten locally – much of it served in family kitchens and at backyard barbecues.
- 3.3 Environmentally concerned consumers can also eat New Zealand salmon with a clear conscience, knowing that our industry is the only farmed salmon industry to have achieved a green light, best choice rating from the gold standard of sustainability guides, Monterey Bay Aquarium's Seafood Watch. Salmon farming is an industry we can be proud of and at the same time be excited about for our future.
- 3.4 An additional ten surface hectares of salmon farming in the open ocean could generate \$140m of revenues, so conceivably the surface hectares equivalent to one dairy farm (average size 144ha) could realise \$2 billion. The industry is always evolving and improving, and we support initiatives to explore and implement new world-leading technologies to move farms further into the open ocean – to deeper and more remote waters and with greater environmental and social benefits.

#### **4.0 Request to be Heard**

AQNZ wishes to be heard in respect of this submission.

As a final comment, we are encouraged by New Zealand King Salmon's consultative approach to this application by proactively engaging and sharing details of the proposal with many key stakeholders from environmental and community groups. This represents best practice for applications of this nature.

I am happy to discuss any of the aspects raised in these comments and/or provide further information as required.

Yours sincerely



Rebecca Clarkson  
**Environment Manager**