

## **Irish Government withdraws plans from impending environmental disaster**

The Irish Government has withdrawn its application for a 15.000 tonnes open sea fish farming project near Galway on the west coast of Ireland. The Government will now undertake a whole new approach to salmon farming just like Iceland decided to do in May of 2014.

A Norwegian company Marine Harvest had applied for this project with Norwegian know-how and Norwegian brood stock which is different from Irish salmon

In recent years NASF and Irish partners have fought bitterly against this project. In March of 2013 a major protest meeting and march was staged in the city of Galway where NASF Chairman was the keynote guest leading the speakers.

The principal concern for this big project is the fear for negative environmental damage and a significant damage to the image of Ireland as a food nation under their Origin Green label and their Wild Atlantic Way tourism branding to attract global travellers in search of pristine nature and anglers seeking premium sport fishing opportunities. Where open sea salmon farming is conducted control of parasites, filth and fodder rubbish has been always been major problem. Initially, the sea lice generated by the fish farms destroy salmon juveniles in the rivers in more than 100 km vicinity and the pesticide treatments used by the industry impacts on shell fish and all other wild resources. However, what most people fear of course is the long term damage to the genetic integrity caused by escapees that enter the salmon river.

New evidence has emerged from Norway that the substance used by the industry goes through the skull of shrimps, lobsters and crab fish and causes' toxic contamination to the detriment of our wild fish.

The Irish Government has discovered that it does not have the necessary resources, knowledge and experience to deal with modern fish farming as the new closed contained technology has now surpassed all other methods especially the open netcage system that has been proven to be unsustainable to Galway Bay and other salmon farms managed by the global producers such as Marine Harvest. Hence they have accepted to make use of EU grant of €30 million to investigate, learn, train and develop expertise for the way ahead in the future fish farming process.

Noel Carr, spokesman for FISSTA (Federation of Irish Salmon and Sea Trout Anglers) said the image of Ireland damaging their marine environment weighted heavily in the notices of legal actions we have filed against the Irish Government. The original EIS (Environmental Impact Statement) had been seriously flawed and the forthcoming general election in Ireland had played a big factor. He emphasised the plans were built on outdated technology and that new alternative clean green closed contained RAS systems had emerged in the form of landbased operations which FISSTA were promoting and had already introduced to state agents with arranged visits to one new RAS plant in Denmark last June 2015. There in Denmark,

the Irish government agency representatives saw a new system that more or less eliminated the long term problems associated with pollution, parasites and genetic contamination that were in the process of wiping out our wild fishery resources in Ireland. This has proven to be a game changer in the state thinking and FISSTA now expect a new revised state aquaculture strategy document being released in the new year. FISSTA envisage such strategy changes to include the new technology achieving their 2023 projection of 45,000 tonnes of netcage farmed salmon to be achieved by RAS technology by 2018 eliminating the negative sealice and pesticide impact on our wild fish.

See also : [www.fissta.com](http://www.fissta.com)

Orri Vigfússon the international chairman of NASF said he was extremely pleased with the competence and leadership of his Irish partners and that this decision by the Irish Government sent the right messages across the north Atlantic world where new vision needed to be introduced to authorities which did not have the right knowledge, experience and resources to do the right thing.

NASF, The North Atlantic Salmon Fund, NASF, is an international coalition of voluntary private sector conservation groups who have come together to restore stocks of wild Atlantic salmon to their historic abundance. – [nasf@vortex.is](mailto:nasf@vortex.is) – [www.nasfworldwide.com](http://www.nasfworldwide.com)

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