



Collaborative Campaigning for Food Sovereignty and Environmental Justice

Hon. Leona Aglukkaq
Minister of Environment

November 14, 2013

RE: Is Environment Canada reviewing a GE fish for approval?

Dear Minister Aglukkaq,

We are writing to ask you to provide an answer to the question:

Is Environment Canada currently assessing a request to approve the genetically engineered (GE, also called genetically modified) Atlantic salmon called “AquAdvantage”, either for commercial production of fish eggs and/or for growing out of the fish?

Both Environment Canada and the company AquaBounty have refused to answer this question.

It is unacceptable that Canadian regulatory departments do not tell the Canadian public what GE animals, if any, are under review for release into our environment and/or food system. It is imperative that the Canadian government provide this minimal level of transparency in the review of all GE products.

If approved, the GE Atlantic salmon would be the first GE food animal approved in the world. The GE fish threatens the future of wild Atlantic salmon populations.

A Canadian decision to allow production of the world’s first GE fish would be precedent setting, and yet Canada’s review is being kept entirely secret, with no public notification that a review is underway, no release of any related information about the GE fish, and no public or industry consultation.

AquaBounty has requested approval in the U.S. based on a plan to produce all the GE fish eggs in Canada, and grow-out the fish in Panama. We only know of the company’s plans for Canada because of the transparency in the U.S. process.

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration is currently reviewing a request to sell the processed GE fish into the U.S. market. The U.S. process has involved the release of substantial information on the GE fish request including a draft environmental assessment, as well as one public meeting and two public comment periods. The Canadian process provides none of this.

Unless you provide transparency on this one question, the first time Canadians will hear about the status of the GE fish in Canada will be after Environment Canada makes its decision.

We ask you to provide a clear answer to this question, and to establish a system to inform the public about which GE products are under review for approval.

Thank you for your attention to this urgent and serious matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'L. Sharratt', is positioned above the typed name.

Lucy Sharratt
Coordinator