

the inter-agency referral system be made responsible for the notification and referral of aquaculture applications to the concerned user groups which are their constituency. For example, a municipality who is asked by the licencing authority to comment on a aquaculture application could notify concerned interest groups such as upland owners and if required hold a public meeting for informational purposes. In this way, its comments to the licencing authority would reflect the concerns of its constituency but the decision as to whether an aquaculture project would proceed would rest with the licencing authority. This decision should of course be consistent with local zoning regulations. Ideally, the comments of the municipality would be based on a clear and comprehensive zoning framework in much the same way that DFO would be expected to comment on an aquaculture application based on a clear regulatory framework which would enable it to assess whether the aquaculture project is potentially harmful to the fishing activity taking place in the same area.

5. Research and Development

a) DFO's West Coast Aquaculture Research Program

The Committee has seen much evidence of the commitment to aquaculture research among the scientists working at the (Nanaimo) Pacific Biological Station and the (Vancouver) Centre for Genetics and Biotechnology in Aquaculture. These two organisations which are part of the Biological Sciences Branch of DFO have been involved in aquaculture related research for over two decades.

The earlier research efforts of the Biological Sciences Branch on both coasts dealt with such topics as the effects of temperature on salmon growth, net pen rearing, the development of vibrio vaccines and the effect of stress on salmon. There was also research into oyster culture and sablefish and halibut culture, like that which is now being pursued intensively in Norway. These earlier Canadian research efforts provided a wealth of information for the developing aquaculture industries of Norway and Scotland.

Current research efforts by DFO's Biological Sciences Branch are two-pronged.⁸ First, is research to solve problems of immediate interest to the industry, such as fish health, nutrition, photo-period control of smoltification, strain evaluation and selective breeding; second, is research to further the long-term development of the industry by providing new technologies to increase the Canadian aquaculture industry's competitive