



## **BACKGROUND**

### **SAFEWAY'S FARMED SALMON: PROFITING FROM EXTINCTION**

Grocery retail giant Safeway is North America's second largest supermarket chain, with over 1,700 stores located throughout the western and central United States and Canada. With \$40.2 billion of sales in fiscal year 2006, generating a profit of over \$800 million, it is no surprise that Safeway is one of the largest sellers of farmed salmon.

In California, where Safeway is headquartered, the production of farmed salmon in open net-cages was banned in 2003, but this has not deterred Safeway from selling the product. Instead, Safeway has looked to countries like Canada and Chile to supply the retail chain, ignoring the growing weight of scientific evidence of the devastating impacts of salmon farming on wild salmon populations, routine marine mammal deaths, and a level of antibiotic and biocide use that outstrips any other livestock industry.

The Coastal Alliance for Aquaculture Reform (CAAR), a coalition of nine conservation groups, First Nations and scientists working to ensure salmon farming in British Columbia is safe for wild salmon, marine ecosystems and coastal communities has been urging Safeway to stop selling farmed salmon from open net-cages and demanding more sustainable production methods. CAAR's "Smarten Up Safeway" campaign asks Safeway and its customers to stop purchasing farmed salmon. Over 80% of the farmed salmon produced in British Columbia is destined for US markets, much of it ending up on the shelves of Californian supermarkets such as Safeway.

In March, 2006, at CAAR's invitation, the President and Chief Operating Officer of Safeway Canada, Chuck Mulvenna, toured the Broughton Archipelago on the BC coast and witnessed the fatal impact that sea lice from salmon farms are having on wild juvenile salmon. Despite an overwhelming body of scientific research detailing the negative effects of salmon farming, a firsthand look at the areas and the communities affected, and increasing consumer awareness of the impacts of this product, Safeway is still unwilling to take a leadership role on the issue.

Safeway's own literature describes their company as one that is progressive on environmental issues and cares about communities, but their decision to ignore peer-reviewed science and continue to purchase farmed salmon is in direct opposition to this policy. Safeway executives claim they cannot take action because they need to maintain retail sector competitiveness. It appears that protecting a small segment of their overall sales is far more important to Safeway than the health of our oceans and wild salmon and the coastal and First Nation communities that depend on wild salmon.

CAAR, along with thousands of supporters, ask that Safeway stop selling open net-cage farmed salmon until the industry adopts better practices. Safeway could use their significant purchasing power to support the creation of a more sustainable salmon farming industry that uses closed containment production. Closed containment is a solution that will allow retailers to continue to sell farmed salmon, while ensuring their products are safe for wild salmon, marine ecosystems and our coastal communities.