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Media Release

King Salmon Draft Decision Concerns EDS

The Environmental Defence Society has noted with concern that the EPA's Board of Inquiry has issued its draft decision on the King Salmon applications today, approving four out of nine salmon farms in the Marlborough Sounds.

"Our technical advice was that all but one of the nine applications for these large industrial salmon farms should be declined on landscape and natural character grounds," said Mr Taylor.

"We acknowledge that the Board has declined consent for 5 sites but it has not gone far enough.

"The areas the consented farms are to be located in are highly natural and in prominent locations in the iconic and internationally renowned Marlborough Sounds.

"The Council Plan for the Marlborough Sounds already sets a clear framework for aquaculture, where it was provided for and where it was prohibited. This community-sanctioned plan is now being over-ridden by private interests.

"Parts of the Marlborough Sounds are already set aside for aquaculture with other areas protected for their outstanding landscapes and tourism values. We are losing the balance between conservation and development interests.

"There are important national issues at stake relating to the New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement 2010. The NZCPS is clear that adverse effects on areas of outstanding natural character and outstanding natural landscapes should be avoided.

"The decision fails to give effect to this clear national direction. The Board of Inquiry found that the Papatua site is outstanding but then approved it, thus failing to give effect to these key policies.

"We also have concerns at the Ministerial pressure that was put on the Board whilst the hearing was underway. That was entirely inappropriate and warrants further consideration.

"Based on an initial read, we consider there are potential errors of law relating to landscape issues. We have asked our legal team to substantively review the decision to see if an appeal to the High Court is warranted, Mr Taylor concluded.

To see the draft decision go to

http://www.epa.govt.nz/Publications/BOI_NZKS_Draft%20Decision_14_Dec_12.pdf