

Demonstrators Target Safeway Annual Shareholders Meeting

Ask Grocery Chain to Stop Selling Farmed Salmon to Protect Consumers and the Environment

Pleasanton, CA – Today at demonstrations by consumer and conservation organizations, Safeway, a giant in the retail grocery store industry, was asked to remove farmed salmon from its stores until the salmon farming industry institutes reforms to ensure this product is healthy for consumers and for the marine environment.

Organized by the Coastal Alliance for Aquaculture Reform (CAAR) -- a diverse coalition of conservation, scientists, first nations, and fishing organizations -- the "day of action" targeted Safeway at its annual shareholders meeting in Pleasanton. Coincidentally, Safeway was also the target of an organized protest by labor today.

"We've had limited success in negotiating with Safeway for more than 2 years, so we are here today asking the CEO, Board and Shareholders of Safeway to re-consider the sale of farmed salmon in its stores, and to provide consumers with labeling so that they know where their fish comes from, how it was raised, and how it impacts the environment and public health," said Sophika Kostyniuk, the U.S. markets campaign organizer for CAAR.

Safeway has been named as one of the 50 defendants under California's main toxics law, Proposition 65, for failing to label farmed salmon as containing PCBs, contaminants that have been linked with cancer. In addition, more than 20,000 faxes have been sent to Safeway corporate headquarters from concerned consumers, with limited to no response.

Farmed salmon is a highly un-natural product, colored with artificial dyes, fed antibiotics and pesticides to fight persistent disease, sea lice and parasites. A stunning peer-reviewed study this year found that farmed salmon flesh contains high levels of toxic contaminants. The scientists leading this study were so alarmed they recommended seriously limiting consumption of farmed salmon basing their recommendations on EPA guidelines for safe consumption levels for fish. According to information recently obtained from British Columbia rendering plants and US Court documents, chicken parts, including blood, carcasses, and feathers are ingredients in farmed salmon feed.

"Not only is farmed salmon concerning for public health reasons, its harmful effects on wild fish and the ways it pollutes the marine environment are well documented. Again and again it is being proven that salmon farming leads to outbreaks of sea lice, disease and other parasitic infections that can be passed onto wild salmon populations when they escape, as they repeatedly do by the thousands, from their net pens in the ocean," added Jennifer Lash, executive director of the Living Oceans Society in British Columbia.

The Coastal Alliance for Aquaculture Reform has launched a campaign aimed at reducing sales and consumption of farmed salmon in order to leverage reform by the

salmon farming industry and improvement in government oversight of this largely unregulated industry. The campaign, "Farmed and Dangerous" has seen a 20-50% drop in farmed salmon sales in recent months.

"More and more people are thinking twice before buying farmed salmon, and its high time this industry cleaned up its act and produced salmon that is safe and healthy for consumers, in a more responsible way that doesn't trash the marine environment," concluded Kostyniuk.

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