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Jeremy Rockliff, Minister for Primary Industries and Water

Greens Scaremongering on Macquarie Harbour: The Facts

Tasmania's salmon industry has a world-class reputation for producing the highest quality seafood.

Tasmania's clean waters are vital for so many industries including salmon production, and the Hodgman Liberal Government will not put our environment at risk.

It is important that we are very vigilant in ensuring that all salmon farms are sustainable and we are working closely with the industry and environmental regulators to protect water quality and environmental health.

The Greens scaremongering about our half a billion dollar industry is absolutely text-book; they are determined to destroy any innovative Tasmanian industry.

Last summer, the three companies who grow salmon in Macquarie Harbour (Huon Aquaculture, Tassal and Petuna), in consultation with DPIPWE, commissioned a CSIRO investigation into the low dissolved oxygen (DO) levels in the bottom waters of the harbour.

The investigation determined that fish farming was likely to be contributing only three to 12 per cent of the benthic oxygen demand. (A draft of this report has been tabled in the Senate yesterday by Senator Whish-Wilson).

While there has been evidence of lower but increasing DO in the bottom waters this summer, there have been no significant fish health or environmental events.

Surface water quality where the fish are growing is within the modelled and regulated parameters and fish production is normal (fish are growing well).

In fact, the companies are reporting good growth rates this summer.

The Government and all three companies are monitoring the harbour, and the Government is preparing a report on the state of the harbour from the monitoring data that considers water quality, fish health and environmental health.

Prior to the completion of this report, the companies and DPIPWE jointly increased monitoring and are doing more research.

All three companies are aware that the bottom level DO has increased again to be consistent with two summers ago, which is good news.

There are a range of factors that affect the bottom water DO, including influx from storm events and flows in the Gordon River.

The Hodgman Liberal Government values the aquaculture industry, which employs thousands of Tasmanians, and we understand the importance of its sustainability.

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