

REGIONAL STATEMENT OF THE FORUM FOR THE CONSERVATION OF THE PATAGONIAN SEA

## THE BEAGLE CHANNEL FREE FROM SALMON FARMING

*In the context of current plans to expand the salmon industry in the Beagle Channel - an area located at the southern end of the Patagonian Sea-, the Forum for the Conservation of the Patagonian Sea expressed its categorical rejection to the installation of salmon farms in these waters which are shared by Chile and Argentina. The main concern is related to the catastrophic and irreversible damages that such an industry would cause in one of the most valuable areas of the Patagonian marine ecosystem. The Forum calls on both governments to develop all the necessary legal and administrative measures to avoid installing salmon farms in these marine waters and to act jointly in the conservation of this area.*

The Beagle Channel is well known for its pristine waters and for hosting one of the largest marine biodiversity reserves in the world. The great heterogeneity of its marine-coastal habitats results in a great variety of marine invertebrates and vertebrates, as well as of different algae species that contributes to the high biodiversity, providing refuge and food for many species. Marine mammals and seabirds travel through the biological corridors that connect the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans as part of their usual migration route, and they are a great regional tourist attraction. This area is especially vulnerable to climate change, pollution and fishing activities. *Due to its characteristics and relevance, in 2013 the Forum identified the Beagle Channel as one of the "Lighthouses of the Patagonian Sea".*

The salmon industry in Chile resulted in severe environmental, social, health, economic and cultural impacts, which are summarized in the following document "[On the possible operation of AQUACULTURE OF SALMONIDES in Tierra del Fuego, Argentina](#)", published by the Forum in 2018. *If salmon farms are installed in the Beagle Channel, the unique values of this marine ecosystem - that does not recognize political borders -*

*will be irreversibly affected. If salmon farms are installed in one country, irremediably it will affect the ecosystem shared by the two countries.*

The Forum for the Conservation of the Patagonian Sea agrees with the joint bi-national position against salmon farms in the Beagle Channel expressed by the Deliberative Council of Ushuaia (Province of Tierra del Fuego, Argentina) and the Communal Council of Puerto Williams (Magallanes Region, Chile), which is also shared by political authorities, communities of Indigenous Peoples and social organizations. The Forum also respects and supports the demands of the Yagan people regarding the use of their ancestral territory. Also, it celebrates the municipal ordinance of the city of Ushuaia that prohibits the operation of this industry within the urban area.

*The nature of the Beagle Channel transcends national boundaries.* Therefore, to promote its conservation and preserve its values, we call on Argentina and Chile to consider the regional scope of this and promote cooperation among communities, organizations, scientists and local, regional and national authorities of both countries. Although, 40 years ago, there was an important conflict for this area between Chile and Argentina thanks to the Treaty of Peace and Friendship signed in 1984 and the 2009 Treaty of Maipú on Integration and Cooperation between both countries, the development of shared guidelines for the protection of this area was achieved. This also strengthened the cooperation between Chile and Argentina.

*The Beagle Channel should be considered a monument for peace by Chile and Argentina; like a Lighthouse to guide and strengthen the bi-national relations towards nature conservation.*

Both countries could honor their friendship by committing to the conservation of the sea that runs along the Beagle Channel, protecting it from harmful activities that might prevent the use of its spectacular and unique natural landscapes and native species. For the reasons above, *we urge the Governments of Chile and Argentina to prohibit salmon farms in the Beagle Channel and to adopt effective measures for the protection of the marine environment in a coordinated manner.*

