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***“Salmon People: The Risks of Genetically Engineered Fish for the Pacific Northwest,”* Premieres Today**

*Indigenous Tribes and Advocacy Groups Host a Panel on Genetically Engineered Salmon Following the Short Film’s Premiere*

SEATTLE, WA – Center for Food Safety and Community Alliance for Global Justice will host [a free webinar](https://register.gotowebinar.com/register/956928449100856579) today from 2-3pm PST to premiere the short film, “*Salmon People: The Risks of Genetically Engineered Fish for the Pacific Northwest.*” A panel discussion featuring indigenous and advocacy perspectives on the risks of genetically engineered salmon will follow the premiere. “*Salmon People,*” a short film running just under four minutes, is co-produced by Community Alliance for Global Justice, Muckleshoot Food Sovereignty Project, and New Canoe Media. The webinar is co-sponsored by Friends of the Earth U.S. and Northwest Atlantic Marine Alliance.

In 2015, the FDA approved genetically engineered salmon, the first ever GE animal to be approved for human consumption anywhere in the world. The Muckleshoot Indian Tribe and the Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians called for sufficient consultation with Tribes to assess the environmental impact of GE salmon production, a legal requirement the FDA did not honor. In 2016, the Quinault Nation joined 11 environmental and food safety organizations in a lawsuit against the FDA.

“Salmon is the pillar of our culture,” said Valerie Segrest, cofounder of the Muckleshoot Food Sovereignty Project, featured in the film and on the panel. “For thousands of years the Coast Salish people have organized our lives around salmon. Corporate ownership of such a cultural keystone is a direct attack of our identity, and the legacy our ancestors have left us.” Segrest is currently developing a curriculum to teach grades K-12 about environmental issues like the risks and impact of GE salmon on the Pacific Northwest’s ecosystem. Fawn Sharp, President of the Quinault Nation, will join Segrest on the panel to discuss Northwest Tribal opposition to GE salmon at state and national levels.

Dr. Pete Knutson, a local fisherman who teaches environmental anthropology at Seattle Central College, will connect the dots between aquaculture and GE salmon. “Salmon feedlots in our waters are subsidized by the degradation of the wild marine environment. Salmon farming multinationals have now joined biotechnology giants to produce synthetic salmon-like fish which presents new dangers,” Knutson cautioned.

George Kimbrell, senior attorney for Center for Food Safety and co-counsel for the plaintiffs argues that the FDA didn’t have the authority to approve and regulate GE salmon in the first place. The FDA claimed The 1938 Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act grants it the right to approve and regulate GE salmon, but those provisions were meant to ensure the safety of veterinary drugs given to livestock, not address entirely new GE animals that can pass along their altered genes to the next generation. “This case is about the future of food: FDA should not, and cannot, responsibly regulate this GE animal, nor any future GE animals, by treating them as drugs under a 1938 law,” said Kimbrell.

Boyce Thorne-Miller, Science Advisor of Northwest Atlantic Marine Alliance, a co-sponsor of the webinar, says: “Nothing about farming or eating GE salmon makes any sense.  It’s bad for the wild salmon, bad for the wild fish that are caught to feed farmed salmon, bad for the ocean into which farmed salmon escape and excrete, bad for the people who rely on wild salmon for their livelihoods, and bad for those who eat salmon expecting high nutritional value.”

In 2017, four U.S. Senators introduced SB 1528, the Genetically Engineered Salmon Labeling Act, including WA Senator Maria Cantwell. Labeling laws offer one necessary stopgap measure toward the prevention of biotech corporations proceeding without having made any good faith consultations with the Tribes, or without adequately addressing concerns raised by Tribes, fisheries, biologists, food system experts, environmental groups, food safety organizations, and citizens. The goal of the film is to create broader public support and demand commitment of elected officials in upholding salmon as a cultural and ecological keystone species in the Northwest.

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*Center for Food Safety’s mission is to empower people, support farmers, and protect the earth from the harmful impacts of industrial agriculture. Through groundbreaking legal, scientific, and grassroots action, we protect and promote your right to safe food and the environment. Please join our more than 950,000 advocates across the country at*[*www.centerforfoodsafety.org*](http://www.centerforfoodsafety.org/)*.*

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*Community Alliance for Global Justice organizes to strengthen the global food sovereignty movement. Through our Food Justice, Trade Justice and AGRA Watch programs, CAGJ seeks to transform unjust trade and agricultural policies and practices while creating and supporting alternatives that embody social and racial justice, sustainability, and grassroots democracy. Learn more at* [*www.cagj.org*](http://www.cagj.org)*. Facebook & Twitter: @CAGJSeattle @AGRAWatch*