



NEWS RELEASE

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NORWEGIAN AQUACULTURE COMPANY TO BUILD ONE OF THE WORLD'S LARGEST LAND-BASED SALMON FARMS IN BELFAST

BELFAST, Maine – After assessing international markets and conducting comprehensive site searches throughout New England, Nordic Aquafarms, headquartered in Norway and one of the premier international developers of land-based aquaculture, has signed agreements to purchase 40 acres on the outskirts of Belfast, where it will build one of the world's largest land-based salmon farms.

Nordic Aquafarms plans to construct a land-based salmon operation with a 33,000 ton (66 million pounds) annual production capacity, in several phases. The initial phase will involve an investment of \$150 million (USD) and is expected to employ 60 people when completed in

the next two years. When fully built out, the facility will represent a total capital investment of between \$450 to \$500 million (USD) and be based on proprietary designs under development. It will be an end-to-end operation, including hatcheries and fish processing.

At a news conference today attended by Maine Governor Paul LePage and other state and local officials, Nordic Aquafarms CEO Erik Heim said: “We see this an attractive opportunity to bring our know-how, solutions and capital strength to the United States. We are committed to producing super fresh, high-quality seafood with a low environmental footprint for U.S. consumers. That requires local production, and we believe that we have found an ideal site here in Maine. We look forward to becoming a responsible and contributing member of the Maine seafood industry.”

“My Administration has been focusing on expanding our economic ties with Northern European nations, and we are delighted to see that investment pay off,” stated Governor LePage. “I welcome Nordic Aquafarms to Belfast and thank them for their investment and the jobs they will be creating. Nordic Aquafarms is a good fit for our state and the Midcoast region.”

Heim said that Maine was chosen after an extensive search based on its pristine environment, cold water conditions, long history as a leader in the seafood industry and proximity to major consumer markets in the Northeast United States. He added that Nordic Aquafarms will be developing production with a low impact discharge of water that is free of any chemicals or medications, that all waste will be recycled and the facility will feature renewable energy solutions.

For the past six months, Nordic Aquafarms has been working closely behind the scenes with Maine & Company, the private, non-profit corporation that assists companies looking to locate or expand Maine, Ransom Consulting, Inc., consulting engineers and scientists, the City of Belfast, and the Belfast Water District, whose property on Northport Avenue the company has an agreement to purchase for its new facility.

“From our very first meeting we recognized that Nordic Aquafarms is exactly the kind of successful, innovative company we need in Maine to help grow our economy and create the jobs of the future,” said Peter DelGreco, Maine & Company CEO. “Nordic Aquafarms has demonstrated a commitment and passion for producing high quality seafood in accordance with the highest sustainable and environmental standards. We are excited to follow them as they become an important and responsible member of Maine’s business and sustainable food community.”

The land that Nordic Aquafarms has agreements to acquire includes approximately 26 acres on Northport Avenue (Route 1) that now belong to the Belfast Water District, which will re-locate its office and garages to a new site, and another 14 acres of abutting land from a private landowner. According to the terms of agreements with the water district, Nordic Aquafarms also will purchase a volume of water from the district, giving it new annual revenue and ensuring that the sale will not have any adverse impacts on rates for water district customers.

Heim said the proposed site has suitable qualities for a land-based seafood farming based on initial due diligence, but Nordic Aquafarms will now proceed with final due diligence, planning and permitting. Construction is expected to start in 2019, with operations commencing in 2020. Phase 1, with a capacity of some 13,000 tons, will be the largest land-based facility project ever built in one construction phase. It will house the largest aquaculture tanks in the world, currently being designed in Norway.

In addition to the 60 new high-skill jobs created in the first stage of the project, many new commercial relationships between the Norwegian and Maine business communities are expected. Heim said he expects to see positive economic development effects both in Maine and in Norway, where Nordic Aquafarms has its international development hub.

The planned annual capacity of the facility when fully built out equals approximately 8 percent of U.S. consumption of salmon. The U.S. has a significant trade deficit on seafood and salmon, and this facility will contribute to closing that gap.

The City of Belfast, which will be assisting the water district with its relocation and taking ownership of recreational trails on the site, sees the project as a great addition to the local economy and a solid win for the city. Belfast Economic Development Director Thomas Kittredge said that the city council, the city staff, and the water district all have worked closely with Nordic Aquafarms, Maine & Company and Ransom Consulting to bring the project to fruition.

“Everyone stepped up when this opportunity presented itself and we all worked hard to get an agreement completed on a rather accelerated timetable,” Kittredge said. “Nordic Aquafarms will be a welcome addition to the Belfast economy and will augment the great food production sector that we already have here.”

Nordic Aquafarms, the City of Belfast and the Belfast Water District are planning to hold several informational meetings in the coming weeks to give local residents an opportunity to learn more about the project and share any questions or concerns they have. The first meeting is expected to take place in February at a time and place to be announced shortly.

Nordic Aquafarms established a U.S. subsidiary, Nordic Aquafarms, Inc., in 2017 as the vehicle for its U.S. growth strategy. Heim, a dual Norwegian/U.S. citizen, is president of the new subsidiary. His objective is to bring together the best of Norway and the U.S. in a high-value growth company in Maine.

Members of the Maine Congressional Delegation also expressed praise and support for the Nordic Aquafarms investment in Maine (see attached).

About Nordic Aquafarms and land-based production

Nordic Aquafarms (www.nordicaquafarms.com) is one of the premier investors and developers in land-based aquaculture internationally, with head-quarters in Norway. Nordic Aquafarms is invested into some of the largest land-based seafood production facilities in the world in Norway and Denmark. The company is developing disruptive sustainable fish farming practices for the future to deliver super fresh high-quality seafood to regional markets, with a low environmental impact. The company's shareholders include some of the most prominent investors in the Norwegian industrial and shipping sectors.

Land-based production is a rapidly emerging method for sustainable production of salmon. It is based on indoor production in large tanks and water treatment systems, and its benefits include: the ability to recycle and treat water on site to reduce overall water consumption, recycling of waste resources, the prevention of sea lice and parasites, the elimination of fish escape into the sea and co-mingling with wild species, the application of renewable energy concepts, and a shorter distance to market for a high quality, fresh product, reducing the carbon footprint of air and land transport.

About Maine & Company

Maine & Company is a private, non-profit corporation with members and a board comprised of senior executives from Maine's top businesses, the president of the Maine State Chamber of Commerce and the commissioner of Maine's Department of Economic & Community Development. It provides free and confidential consulting services to businesses looking to relocate to Maine or expand within Maine.

Maine & Company services include real estate site searches, data collection and analysis, incentives identification and valuation, site visit coordination, workforce analysis, and financing coordination.

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Statements from members of the Maine Congressional Delegation about the Nordic Aquafarms investment in Maine:

U.S. Senator Susan Collins

“Maine’s fishing industry is a vital part of our economy, our coastal communities, and our state’s heritage. Nordic Aquafarm’s decision to build an innovative, environmentally friendly aquaculture facility in Belfast will help expand this important industry and create new jobs for Mainers,” said Senator Collins. “This significant investment is great news for Belfast and the surrounding communities.”

U.S. Senator Angus King

"Aquaculture is a growing force in Maine's economy, bringing new jobs and opportunities to our state's fishing industry," said Senator Angus King. "Nordic Aquafarm's facility will build on our state's rich fishing traditions and promote innovation and sustainability that can help Belfast and the surrounding community thrive. This is an investment in Maine people, Maine jobs, and the future of our economy. To the entire Nordic Aquafarm team: tusen takk og velkommen til Maine!"

Second District U.S. Representative Bruce Poliquin

“This is another great economic development success for the City of Belfast and the Water District,” said Second District Congressman Bruce Poliquin. “I want to thank Nordic Aquafarms for their investment in Maine and the new jobs and opportunities it will create. Our state has a proud heritage as a leader in the seafood industry, and land-based aquaculture especially is going to be an important part of our 21st Century economy. My office is fully committed to doing our part in helping our job creators, like Nordic Aquafarms, grow and succeed in Maine.”