

Kenichi Wiegardt

(Email Submission)

I appreciate to opportunity to comment on the SEIS and the burrowing shrimp NPDES permit.

I urge Dept. of Ecology to issue this permit. The option of "No action" in the SEIS is not an option at all. If this path is chosen the economic as well as ecological damage will be immense.

The people who have applied for this permit are all long time residents on Willapa Bay, with many of them being multi generational. Unlike large companies who grow shellfish in many locations along the West coast of the United States Willapa Bay is all these growers have. Personally I have kept it this way for my company because this bay and surrounding community is my home, I'm proud of my family's history here. If this permit is not issued myself and many others will be forced to close our doors. Hundreds of full time employees along with their families will have to find employment elsewhere, most likely outside of Pacific County. Local school districts will be severely affected, as enrollment will drop as families once supported by shellfish will be forced to go elsewhere.

Growing up on the tidelands of Willapa Bay I have first hand experience of what happens when an area is infested by burrowing shrimp. The ground becomes a barren wasteland, with nothing but burrowing shrimp present. Gone are all the other things that inhabit a healthy tideland. There are no crab, no eelgrass, no shellfish, no snails, no birds present. Nothing. For the people that have applied for this permit it is about much more than assuring we can grow shellfish on the ground. We care deeply about about the ground and want it to remain healthy and vibrant with a diverse amount of different animals and plants being able to utilize it.

Again I urge Dept. of Ecology to issue the NPDES permit for burrowing shrimp control.