

# Sabine Doenninghaus

Dear Madam or Sir,

regarding the proposed Puget Sound Nutrients General Permit, I would like to draw your attention to the deteriorating water quality of Puget Sound I have witnessed personally. As a public observer and citizen of the region, I urge you to support the implementation of a permit. In 2011, I started to swim and snorkel in Puget Sound on a regular basis, i.e. at least twice a week year round. I have monitored two sites in South Puget Sound since then, and I have personally witnessed the disappearance of not only several species of seastars since 2013, but also crabs and squid overall. Regarding the disappearance of seastars, I would like to draw your attention to the so-called seastar-wasting-disease or "event" (see the multitude of academic and other articles on the following website:

<https://marine.ucsc.edu/data-products/sea-star-wasting/articles.html>). Within only 8 years, I have seen intertidal areas that were full of life in 2011 (a lot of different kinds of crabs, seastars, fish, squid/squid eggs) to almost barren underwater landscape (with few exceptions, for instance leather stars (*Dermasterias imbricata*)). I have no doubt that this change is directly related to human population growth and activities in the Puget Sound region affecting not only the water quality but also the structural habitat of various sealife (not the mention the orcas, seals and sealions). If we do not stop polluting Puget Sound, I am sure there will be no sealife left within a few years to a decade from now because the human population in the region is growing very quickly, and the majority of the population does not care about what is under water unless it is fish for food or the occasional orca for "sightseeing" and excitement. Businesses and also private people need to stop polluting Puget Sound and drastically reduce the emission of nutrients into the water that destroy the natural habitat of animals (and ultimately humans). People and businesses need to be made more aware of the fact that everything that enters the waters of Puget Sound has an impact on all of the lifeforms in it and around it. The implementation of a strict permit system with rigorous controls and rules is a very good idea to help save the Salish Sea. If we, the inhabitants of the Puget Sound area, want to protect our Sea and the living creatures in it, we need to act NOW. In times of overall climate crisis and plastic pollution of the Pacific and other oceans, we cannot afford to rest and idle.

In order to prevent a further deterioration of the water quality of the Salish Sea, I urge you to support the implementation of a nutrient permit and strict rules regarding waste water in the area.

Thank you for your time and attention.

Sincerely,

Sabine Doenninghaus, PhD RN