

Pacific County Noxious Weed Control Board
Department of Vegetation Management
410 Quincy Street, P.O. Box 88, South Bend, Washington 98586



November 2, 2019

To whom it may concern,

The Pacific County Noxious Weed Control Board is in support of renewing the permit for the treatment of *Zostera japonica* in Willapa Bay. While the permit does have some obvious flaws (i.e. it bans applications on non-commercial areas), it is still better than nothing. Land managers need tools at their disposal to allow them to be good stewards of their property.

Those groups and individuals that want to see the State enforce a chemical-free estuary lack the perspective to fully grasp what that would look like. After reviewing the permit and the comments that have already been submitted, it is clear to the Noxious Weed Control Board that this is much more a political issue than an ecological or environmental one. It appears that the opposition is much better at organizing support, but their comments lack scientific substance. Most of them repeat the same inaccurate information over and over. This is tribalism, not rationality.

Those in opposition to the renewal all seem to operate under the presumption that a natural ecosystem will invariably improve when human impacts are removed; this is simply not true. Noxious weeds like *Spartina alterniflora* and *Zostera japonica* are already here in Willapa Bay. Without adequate management, those invasive species would wreak havoc. Twenty years ago, Willapa Bay was on track to become a monotypic field of *Spartina*. It is only because of the targeted use of herbicide that we are even able to have this discussion. Those claiming that chemicals are killing the bay are dead wrong. The opposite is actually true; chemicals *saved* the Bay. The results of a hands-off approach, would be drastically different than what these optimistically delusional nature-lovers envision. Organisms compete for resources and some are better at it than others. When invasive species enter the equation, the ecosystem is no longer "natural" and will require human intervention to prevent monocultures and to maintain stasis. Interventions can take many forms but should always create the best result with the least cost. The responsible use of herbicides is a crucial tool to accomplish this goal.

Those who make their living in aquaculture have a vested interest in protecting the health of the Bay. They do not take this responsibility lightly. The total acreage treated under this permit will represent only a tiny fraction of the *japonica* present in Willapa Bay, but its removal will have far-reaching impacts on the surrounding community. Please do not fall victim to groupthink. Do the right thing, even if it is not the popular thing. Thank you for your time and attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Jeff Nesbitt

Director

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