

I write in support of the salmon farming industry in Washington and its plan to switch production to the farming of triploid rainbow trout. For reference, I was general manager of Sea Farm Washington in 1984 when the company established the salmon farm in Port Angeles harbor and a salmon hatchery in Rochester. Since then I have advocated for the US to expand aquaculture production in all its marine waters in order to meet growing national and global seafood demand, which cannot be supplied by capture fisheries.

However, marine aquaculture in the US since then has only happened on a very modest scale and, as an aquaculture producer of fish and shellfish, the US now ranks only 17th in the world, even though 53% of global seafood supply is now produced by aquaculture. As a result, 90% (\$16.8 billion) of the seafood we now eat in the US comes from abroad, over half of it from aquaculture¹. By contrast US agriculture is one of the world's leading producers of terrestrial food and Washington state is a substantial and proud contributor to this production, and a beneficiary of the economic activity it brings.

It is noteworthy, however, that despite our limited national aquaculture production Washington state has been one of the leaders in the industry for several decades, with well established businesses producing shellfish, trout and salmon. To close one of these businesses down now because of concerns about how some of the farms are being run seems like a retrograde step and an overreaction to the concerns, especially at a time when job losses due to Covid 19 threaten the wellbeing of thousands of the State's workers.

Surely, if there are concerns about some of the farms' operations, a more constructive approach would be to put in place an inspection regime, at the farms' expense, which would verify that best farming practices are consistently followed. Not only would this reassure those who are now concerned, but it would help to build confidence in an industry for which there is more demand for its products than it can supply and create a basis for possible future expansion, thereby creating more jobs and helping to reduce our dependence on imports.

Finally, I understand that there may be concern at DOE about the water quality impacts of this change in species. I see no reason for such concern. These Rainbow trout will be fed the same feed as is fed to salmon and will convert it into growth at approximately the same, or perhaps better, Food Conversion Rate (FCR). Therefore, water quality impacts will be no different.

1. Ref: <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/national/aquaculture/us-aquaculture>

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