

To whom it may concern,

It is my understanding that Cooke Aquaculture Pacific has applied for permits to transition to raising all-female triploid steelhead trout in its Washington state net pens. This is due to the change in Washington law requiring marine net pens to raise only native species of fish. As a result, Cooke Aquaculture Pacific will no longer be allowed to sustainably raise Atlantic salmon in Washington state.

Steelhead trout are a native species to Washington and triploids cannot reproduce, therefore mitigating any opportunity for wild-farmed fish interactions.

Raising sterile fish will minimize the risk of genetic interference to local Steelhead stocks. The all-female triploid Steelhead stocks do not mature and therefore have no instinct to reproduce. This is a scientifically proven solution and allows Cooke Aquaculture Pacific to continue to be in business providing healthy and sustainable seafood products to their West Coast customers, while at the same time creating employment and business opportunities for Americans in the communities in which they operate.

The United States imports over 90% of the seafood it consumes. There is no reason the U.S. and Washington State could not be producing more of its own seafood domestically. We all know that both capture and farmed seafood production are compatible and essential in meeting an increasing global demand for healthy and sustainable seafood products.

Cooke Aquaculture, a family owned company, has been operating in rural coastal communities of Newfoundland and Labrador, Canada, for almost two decades. The company has proven itself to be a responsible corporate citizen that believes in locally produced premium seafood, creating local job opportunities, and contributing to local economic activity in the communities where they farm.

As the Mayor of Hermitage, a community on the South Coast of Newfoundland in which Cooke operates a processing facility and marine sites, His Worship Steve Crewe has said publicly, "Without Aquaculture we would not exist".

Sincerely,

Mark Lane, C.D.  
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