

Karen Jones

I live directly in front of the pens in Fort Ward. I don't think changing species will help with the real problems the pens are presenting in Rich Passage, which are pollution and excessive noise. The pens appear to be in a state of neglect, and we have stopped swimming off of our beach because the water is too polluted. The water has a foul taste and smell. Kayaking near the pens when the water is clear shows a very polluted bed under and around the pens. Supposedly the pens were built here because the current would carry away waste, but that is clearly not the case. There is also the noise from the sea lions, which the company is failing to control. We have counted well over 150 sea lions on the decks of the pens, the noise from them is unbelievably loud. If it were a neighbor with a barking dog I would call the police to complain, so Imagine 150 dogs barking all day and all night! We are awake for part of every night because of the noise. I have occasionally seen workers during the day walking the decks and shooing the sea lions off, but they return right away. With the limited time left on the contract and the amount of work needed to upgrade the pens to make them ecologically sound, along with the noise nuisance for our neighborhood, the wisest choice would be to begin closure activities to meet the 2022 deadline, with no extension to 2024.