

Don Schulte

To Whom It May Concern,

Cooke Aquaculture's current operating practices on Bainbridge Island, and their potential negative effect on water quality, must be taken into account when evaluating their Steelhead permit application.

Our primary concern is related to the 100 or so sea lions and seals that have taken up residence for several months on the pens located in Rich Passage. They are producing waste above and beyond what is generated by the farming activities in Cooke's operation which should be included in the assessment. The sea lions are also damaging the containment netting which increases the probability of an uncontrolled release of fish given Cooke's apparent unwillingness to make capital improvements.

Cooke management has acknowledged the situation is unacceptable in phone conversations and a saved voice message. Unsatisfactory financial results appear to be part of the reason why Cooke has not taken action and funded the necessary improvements. Cooke appears unlikely to do anything about the current situation without the State requiring improvements as a condition of the operating permit.

We appreciate your requiring Cooke to solve this nuisance as a condition to their continued operation. Their unwillingness to invest should serve as a red flag to other commitments they may be making in this application.

Regards,

Don and Julie Schulte