

Dan Coombs D.V.M.

As I have stated in the past, Washington state is on the right track by phasing out most forms of fish aquaculture in Puget Sound over the next couple of years. Cooke's move to change the game by "trying" a second species for their net pens does little or nothing to avert water quality, disease spread and genetic mixing of fish species. Each salmon/trout species carries its own set of parasites and diseases and not 100% of sterilized steelhead are in fact sterile. On top of these ongoing issues it seems that Cooke would like to relax certain rules that provide some protection of our wild salmon stocks. Would they even consider complying with rules set by NPDES and the stricter regulations of HB2957 concerning marine net pens? Their record in Puget Sound should help answer those questions. I have special training in aquaculture via Texas A&M. In many cases aquaculture can be a safe and effective means of producing high quality protein for the public at low risk to the environment. Most of these projects are land based and are not dumping polluted water into any body of water i.e. catfish farming. This is not the case with marine net pen operations especially in our already troubled Puget Sound.