

Aquaculture Association of Nova Scotia

June 2, 2020

Re: Cooke Aquaculture
Application to Transition to Raising Steelhead Trout, Washington State

To Whom it may Concern;

I am writing to the Washington State Department of Ecology in support of Cooke Aquaculture's application to transition their business in Washington State to farm Steelhead Trout. Steelhead trout are a native species to Washington and triploids cannot reproduce.

- Raising sterile fish will minimize the risk of genetic interference to local Steelhead stocks.
- The all-female triploid Steelhead stocks do not mature and go into spawning mode and therefore have no instinct to reproduce themselves.
- This is a good solution and allows Cooke Aquaculture Pacific to continue to be in business providing healthy and sustainable seafood products to West coast customers.

Cooke Aquaculture in Nova Scotia is a well-respected company that supports many local businesses and support industries. In 2019 alone, Cooke Aquaculture purchased more than \$52 Million from local Nova Scotia suppliers and employed hundreds of local Nova Scotians to work in the operations around the Province.

The Aquaculture Association of Nova Scotia works closely with Nova Scotia communities on aquaculture education, outreach and engagement activities, and Cooke Aquaculture has supported these efforts every step of the way.

Fish farming is increasingly important to local communities as an economic driver for the region as well as an important source of protein to satisfy an increasing demand for seafood production. This operation will be an essential component of Washington State's need to produce more local seafood.

Respectfully Submitted,

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