

Lisa Stidham

I am concerned about the health of puget sound and our salmon runs...this shared resource needs to be restored and protected as much as possible. I believe that there are too many open questions/known negatives to continue to allow net pens...it's going to take sacrifice from all to achieve success.

Details on specific concerns:

Rearing concentrated populations in what are effectively aquatic animal feedlots, face greater risk of disease, parasitic, and viral amplification than wild fish populations. When outbreaks break out in net pens, the disease-causing organisms are rapidly amplified in number and discharged to the surrounding aquatic environment in large numbers. Because wild steelhead and other species of concern (i.e. coho salmon, ESA-listed Chinook salmon and bull trout and as required by WAC 197-11-080) swim in close proximity to the pens, there is likely to be a spread of disease from infected farmed fish to these endangered wild populations.

In 2017, a B.C. study documented a strong correlational connection between disease prevalence in net pens and disease transfer to wild fish populations (Morton et al., 2017). Recent research in British Columbia found novel viruses in endangered salmon, and found evidence that these novel viral infections may originate from farmed salmon and trout (Mordecai et al., 2019).