

Frances Glass

Sadly, it always seems to come down to environmental impact vrs jobs in our current climate. As so many people on the environmental side have stated eloquently and with well documented data, fish farming is not helping the water quality in Rich Passage or anywhere else in the Puget Sound. I am a newer resident to the area and can see since moving here that the Cooke pens are in need of maintenance and clearly not operating at the "Highest Standards".

Many of those who want the permit approved have cited Cooke as leaders of best practices in the industry. Now is an opportunity for them to take the extra time to prove that to the community by addressing our concerns. Let the Department of Ecology do their homework. They may find that those who oppose the permit change are not doing so based on false information. It is inconvenient, perhaps, but until more is known about the impact of the switch it should not be dismissed.

Cooke's "Common Sense" approach to moving forward is what any for profit entity might hope for. Quick approval, minimum oversight, uninterrupted operations and continuation of employment. Who can blame them? And it's at least not as bad as Atlantic Salmon as far as we know? But we don't really know.

So if it's really just about rubber stamping and keeping this industry afloat, just say so. If it is about weighing the environmental impact and raising standards, take the extra time and address these real concerns.