

Nikolas Mardesich

As a lifelong resident of Washington State I am both angry and disappointed that the State of Washington would even consider continuing to allow the practice of Open Net pen salmon farming in Washington. After decades of escape events and damage to local ecosystems from feed and fish waste contamination, as well as documented disease outbreaks in Washington, BC and elsewhere in the world. This proposal is a debacle. I strongly urge the State of Washington to not allow these operations to continue. Cooke Aquaculture's attempt to sidestep State laws and pull the wool over the eyes of State taxpayers by raising steelhead trout rather than Atlantic salmon is an insult, and should be taken as so by WDFW, DNR, and the Department of Ecology. I have included a picture of Atlantic salmon which escaped due to Cooke Aquaculture's negligence in the 2017 Cypress Island escape event and which were caught by me in my skiff. I urge WDFW, DNR, and the Washington State Department of Ecology to remember their mandates and lead the way in protecting our State's irreplaceable natural resources.

Sincerely, Nik Mardesich