

# Greg Lambert

I fully support the request from Cooke Aquaculture Pacific to transition to an all female sterile stock of Steelhead Trout.

From a native/non-native perspective, this Washington State based strain is the same strain that is already grown in Washington State Waters by Private and Government facilities for both public fishing opportunities and in the Columbia River for human consumption. If it is safe enough to be intentionally stocked by the State of Washington into public watersheds, reason holds that the state should fully back this move as well.

From a food safety view, 90% of US consumed fish is imported creating an enormous negative trade deficit for the country. Growing nutritious and safe seafood in our backyard is a no brainer that should be encouraged and not demonized. Aquaculture grown seafood has among the lowest carbon footprints of all protein sources, and requires the smallest quantities of freshwater and feed inputs to produce a kg of consumable product. One must realize that wild/capture based fisheries are already maxed out and harvested numbers will not grow beyond today's numbers while the demand for protein and seafood in particular will only increase. This increased demand can only be met by aquaculture for if not, the pressure on wild stocks will only increase and result in further damage to recovery efforts of both fish and mammalian species.

From a discharge perspective and the primary point on if this modification will be approved or not, this move should also be applauded, in addition to having better feed conversion ratios, steelhead grow faster than Atlantic Salmon and are harvested at a smaller size which results in a smaller quantity of feed used. Lower quantities of inputs will result in lower quantities of outputs.

Finally, this move by Cooke Pacific would allow them to continue to employ Washingtonians in a time where good jobs such as these are harder and harder to find and keep. I trust the Department of Ecology will do their homework and weed out the false information/scare tactics used by groups and individuals who are opposed to this permit change and ultimately approve this common sense approach being used by Cooke. Cooke is only trying to comply with the Legislature's wishes and grow species which are Native to the Pacific Northwest and Washington specifically and i can't think of a more native stock than these Washington based sterile Steelhead.

Keep the jobs and keep the pressure off of wild strains, approve this permit alteration!