

# Doug Love

I am against any approval of Cooke's request for a revised permit to allow the farming of Steelhead in Puget Sound for the following reasons:

1. Cooke has shown itself to be reckless in maintaining its fish pens in multiple locations on multiple occasions. Their recklessness in 2017 at their Cypress Island pens led to hundreds of thousands of farmed salmon being released. After the release, they tried to cover up both the cause of the release (their failure to properly clean the pen nets, and their continued farming in a pen that was falling apart and needed to be replaced) and the number of fish released. They also violated their lease at Port Angeles by operating outside of their lease boundaries and not maintaining the pens. It is not prudent for Washington State to approve a permit modification that will allow a negligent operator to continue to operate.
2. Cooke has not learned from their past mistakes nor improved their behavior. Last fall local residents living near their net pens at Orchard Rocks had to call the Coast Guard because one of their pens was sinking. That pen is now supported by supplemental flotation attached to the pen. Why did Cooke not notice the failing pen and take steps to remedy it before neighbors had to call the Coast Guard? Again, it is imprudent for Washington State to approve a permit modification that will enable a negligent operator to continue operating. The State should leave Cooke's existing lease as is and let it expire in a few years according to its terms.
3. The farms create a large amount of water pollution from fish excrement and uneaten fish food. This is not healthy for native species nor humans that swim in the waters or eat native seafood harvested from these waters.
4. The farms create an increased risk of disease and parasites among the farmed fish that can spread to native populations of fish and other aquatic life. Any antibiotics and medicines used to prevent or treat fish diseases or to kill parasites pose a risk of creating resistant diseases and parasites and harming native species. In addition, such antibiotics and medicines might pose a health risk to humans who swim in the waters or eat fish or crabs and other shellfish harvested from the area.
5. Land-based fish farms are a much better alternative for providing farmed fish. Land-based farms create little to no risk of introducing pollution, disease, parasites, antibiotics or medicines into natural waters. Land-based fish farms are successfully operating in Europe, Canada and the U.S., including in Iowa, Wisconsin, Idaho and Florida. For example, Riverence, formerly Clear Springs Foods, has for years used land-based farms in Idaho to raise Steelhead Trout. Atlantic Sapphire is using land-based farms near Miami, Florida to raise salmon for the U.S. market. Washington State should promote land-based seafood farms, not farms in Puget Sound that create risks to both native fish and other aquatic life and to humans.