

Burden-Brant Family

I am writing to you representing all the voices from our family of four, all voting and tax-paying adults, who live in the same household and are in agreement that on-water net-pen fish production, which has been banned in Oregon and California, should be banned everywhere in Washington State (and Canada). If entrepreneurs want to produce large numbers of fish in captivity, they should build facilities on land for doing so and deposit the wastes from these production facilities on land, as well.

It has been shown by numerous studies how polluting net-pen production is to the natural environment, especially the estuaries near where most of these operations are located. Estuaries are very fragile environments that house most of the juvenile stages of fish we like to eat and the forage fish they need to survive. We have also seen much information about the disease and parasite load that these penned-up fish carry because they are so crowded and confined.

Our federal and state governments, and tribes spend millions of dollars to restore native fish populations, and it is our opinion that on-water penned populations, whether sterile, GMO or not, threaten the health of our wild fish. Disease-ridden confined populations must be medicated with pharmaceuticals to keep them alive, just like confined cows, pigs and chickens. All confined, drugged animals, who are fed with cheap industrially produced feed, produce food for human consumption that is nutritionally inferior and lacks taste. Often the meat has to be artificially dyed to look palatable.

We are tired of having to eat industrially-produced, nutritionally deficient food. It is one of the reasons a huge number of Americans are so prone to catch diseases like COVID 19. We eat food that looks like what our grandparents ate, but it is nutritionally deficit and helps create a malnourished population with lousy immune systems.

So, there are innumerable reasons why we ask that the Cooke Aquaculture Pacific NPDES permit applications be denied. They are as many as fish in the sea.

We also understand that Jamestown S'Klallam fish producers wanted to experiment with some innovative solutions to the problems created by confined fish operations, and we support that idea, but think it is not worth the risk of the harm the operations could do to new nearby estuary development, that has been so lovingly tended by so many, so that it is a thriving environment for smolts and forage fish. It would be much better to conduct the proposed experiments at an on-land fish farm with water pumped from the sea.

These types of operations are becoming much more prevalent, especially in the shellfish industry because of acidifying sea water. Similarly, confined fish operations should be built on land that might house the fish in even better environments than net pens.

Thank you for this opportunity to state our opinions and hopes that our state can reclaim the rivers, estuaries and marine waters for thriving populations of wild fish, not crowded, captive artificial

ones.

Lys & Dan Burden
Daniel & Mike Brant