

## Martha Hall

I'm sorry that our legislature did not just ban in-water fish farms in Puget Sound in 2018. I'm sorry WDFW is issuing a permit to Cooke to raise native fish in Puget Sound at 4 sites, one near me, Hope Island. Many negative impacts have not changed because Cooke changed to a native species such as water pollution and the possibility of diseased fish and use of antibiotics because this is "factory farming" at its worse because the farmed fish will be sharing the same waters as our wild fish and some of our most important waters in Puget Sound.

I listened to the oral comments from a person who said humans must have a source of fish. He also said now and in the future more of the fish will come from "fish farms" rather than from wild salmon. I disagree with both of his statements. Humans do not have to eat fish. That's a choice. There are many other sources of protein, and far safer sources that have not been pumped full of antibiotics as they are produced. If farmed fish are not available, all fish would come from wild sources and this would be far better for the Salish Sea. It would honor our pledge to lead in protecting the Salish Sea by banning fish farms. We can then hope Canada will do this too. As our human population grows and our the Salish Sea suffers from the impacts of climate change more and more, humans will need to make some hard choices, like change our eating habits so we eat far less meat and fish. As we see more of the negative impacts of our over-use of antibiotics when producing meat and fish we will need to take them out of food production. Factory farms are not safe for the animals that must live in them until they were killed and eaten, "harvested" and their products are not safe for humans and our pets.

The pollution caused by the fish food, fish feces and antibiotics coming from pens that use the waters of the Salish Sea is just plain unacceptable to many of us who have worked hard to reduce and stop pollution. We are working hard to try to protect our declining populations of salmon and resident orcas. It seems like our state agencies should be doing the same.

Allowing factory farms, fish farms, to operate in the waters of the Salish Sea is extraordinarily short-sighted. Everything inside of the nets on these fish farms may get out including diseases, feces, antibiotics, and fish food. These create point-source pollution and the Department of Ecology is going to issue permits for this! This is shocking after all of the efforts of the people of WA State to clean-up the Salish Sea. Our cities are spending millions on wastewater treatment. We are checking our outfalls. Boats must store sewage. Farmers are being told to fence off riparian areas to keep livestock feces out of streams that flow into the Salish Sea. We've spent millions trying to "save our salmon" through dozens of efforts. Why, when our state agencies move ahead to give permits for fish farms that we do not need to have in WA State. The fish farms generate a few jobs, very few. Profits go to Cooke, not the people of WA State. We just get the pollution!

As to the so-called stricter pollution standards, I find the self-reporting by Cooke on various items like the monthly reports on fish food consumption and monitoring for escaped farmed fish totally unacceptable. Cooke clearly demonstrated that a third-party is needed to oversee all of its operation on at least a weekly basis if not daily. Cooke has a long history of not reporting and properly dealing with diseases in fish in its pens. It tried to avoid responsibility for the collapse of the net pen near my home and lied to us saying it was caused by unusual circumstances. Escapes have not been

reported. Why does the Dept. of Ecology think Cooke will operate any differently in the future? Who believes Cooke will closely monitor and report escaped fish or food consumption or use of antibiotics or anything else?

Sustainable agriculture, in the water and on land, should be our goal. Factory farming in the Salish Sea or the Skagit Valley farmland is not sustainable. It is also not humane to the poor animals, the fish, who live their lives crammed into over-crowded pens and fed antibiotics to keep them artificially healthy. This should not be part of our vision for the future in the State of WA. We don't have to have fish farms in our state. We'll be able to get enough protein without fish farms. I'm very disappointed in our legislature for not banning all fish farms and I'm disappointed in my three state agencies who have lined up to issue permits to Cooke for factory farming in the Salish Sea.