

**Oral Presentation to the Board of Environmental Protection
Hutchinson Center, Belfast, Maine, February 11, 2020**

Good evening. My name is Sidney Block. I live in Northport.

50 years ago I was called to duty in the United States Air Force. I took an oath to protect our country. I served honorably. I followed the rules. I did what I was supposed to do.

For the last 2 years I have watched Nordic Aquafarms do what it is supposed to do. It is an investment company whose job is to make us want to buy their farm, whether or not we need it, whether or not it is good for us. It is classic Madison Avenue.

I am surprised by how readily our Governor, our legislators and local officials bought into Nordic's pitch, swallowed the financial bait, and then found themselves either convinced or hooked, despite accumulating contrary facts and evidence. Their amplification of Nordic's promotion has engendered an unrealistic expectation of significant economic benefits for the City. When all the final costs and consequences are tallied, Belfast's taxpayers are going to be justifiably disappointed.

Nordic's promises have unnecessarily divided equally well-meaning citizens of Waldo County. Sadly, whether or not Nordic comes, it will have built one thing: an unnecessary and unwanted wall between our economic and environmental interests. Nordic has wounded our community and the scar will be slow to heal.

Frankly, my biggest disappointment is with our regulatory agencies: Supposedly expert, independent, featured by fairness and imbued with integrity, first these agencies bypassed the foremost fundamental determination of TRI which exists to save themselves time and energy and taxpayers, money. Then they ignored, bent and stretched their own permitting rules while constraining and confining their hearings to unfairly favor and follow political pressure, suspect science and financial fantasy.

My parents, your parents and grandparents, survived the Great Depression, rebuilt our economy and protected our country by their selfless service in the Second World War. They have aptly been called "The Greatest Generation". Sadly, we, our generation, we have not been the best of stewards for the world they left us. What will we leave in our environment for those who will follow us?

Because I am not optimistic about the outcome of these hearings, I speak this evening for the record, so that one day when our Little River forest and wildlife habitat are but a memory, our Belfast Bay waters once again polluted and our economy and residential neighborhoods demeaned, when our children and grandchildren ask, "How did this happen?", they will learn that I, amongst others, did care.

I was lucky during the Vietnam War, stationed stateside. Still, every so often a stranger thanks me for my military service, and I reply, "I only did what I was supposed to do". I would like to be able to thank you for your service to Maine. Do what you are supposed to do. You are the Bureau of Environmental Protection. You are supposed to protect our environment. Do your duty. If not you, who? If not now, when? If not here, where?

Sidney R. Block, Major, USAF (ret)
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