

Letter to the Maine DEP – Feb. 17, 2020

My husband and I have been coming to Maine for almost 50 years with our first visit the summer after we were first married. We are the home owners “From Away” that are attracted to Maine because of the natural beauty, great sailing, clean water and friendly people.

We have been following the details of the request by Nordic Farms to build a very large fish farming facility that seems to be utilizing outdated systems. Instead of being built as a closed loop system, Nordic Farms will take 1,250 gallons per minute of fresh water from the aquifer and neighboring wells, dump 7.7 million gallons of discharge **DAILY** into Penobscot Bay, and the destroy a mature forest. These statistics are very difficult for people to digest and accept. How can this be good for the environment of Maine?

As a couple who made a conscious decision to purchase a home here because of the beauty of the environment, it is hard to stand by and watch it destroyed with no controls in place. We watched as Belfast reclaimed the waterfront from the poultry and canning operations, cleaned the water, added walkways along the harbor and expanded the offerings in the city. It will be sad to lose this momentum.

Since your department is the steward charged with doing the best for the environment, I would like to offer some protections that I think you should put in place if you are determined to go forward with the Nordic Application.

1. Before any additional money is spent on the review of their applications, I would recommend that the legal question of Title is settled in the court. Both sides of this question are expending much money and for any other entity, title would be established first before a permit review process goes forward.
2. Since there is scientific evidence provided that disputes many of the Nordic’s claims about the impact of discharging 7.7 million gallons daily into the bay, it would be fiscally prudent to require them to post an environmental bond. This would only be used if their calculations were incorrect and damage occurred or they had an accident. Any environmental cleanup would be expensive for the State, Belfast and the community. Now while Nordic Farms has the financial backing, a bond should be required. If there is a problem, Nordic would probably declare bankruptcy and again all the remediation costs would be borne by the State and Belfast.
3. Again, as the test wells have proven, there is a good chance that the aquifer will be altered by the amount of fresh water that is required for this operation. If neighboring wells are depleted or compromised, it should be the responsibility of Nordic Farms to pay for Belfast to connect these compromised properties to the Belfast Water System. Again Nordic should provide a bond for this contingency so the neighbors are protected and Belfast does not have to pay for this expense.
4. With all the science provided about the value of trees to the environment, it is irresponsible to allow Nordic farms to clear cut over 25 acres of land. Nordic should be required, at least, to plant an equivalent number of replacement trees perhaps buffering the neighbors.

In addition, I understand Belfast, like all towns, needs to receive additional revenue. However, they should adopt innovative, environmentally sound, creative technologies and systems that drastically

lower greenhouse gas emissions. It is my understanding that far better aquaculture systems exist that require significantly less energy, recycle all their waste and do not entail the antibiotics, pesticides and caustic cleaners that Nordic requires. Maine should choose to support corporations utilizing these fully closed systems. We would support any industry that does not destroy the environment.

The DEP is charged with protecting the environment and natural resources of the state of Maine. Please do not approve this application so that the beautiful Penobscot Bay will be preserved for our children, grandchildren and future generations.

Sincerely,

 Janet and Tom Duggan

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