

August 25, 2020

P.O. Box 153  
Spruce Head, Maine  
04859

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Gregg Wood  
Maine Department of Environmental Protection  
17 State House Station  
Augusta, ME 04333-0017

Dear Mr. Wood,

I am responding to the news printed in The Free Press on 8/18/20 that the State Board of Environmental Protection released its draft approval of a key wastewater discharge permit and license for the land-based salmon farm proposed by Nordic Aquafarms in Belfast. As a resident on the shores of Muscongus Bay I am horrified! Having recently returned from Patagonia where salmon farms are prevalent, I am aware of their impact on the sea. As a Maine resident choosing to live at the ocean where we would be very much affected by votes such as yours, I am compelled to write.

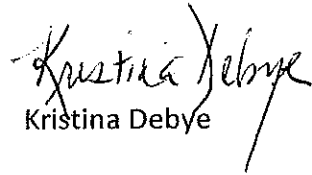
In the same issue of The Free Press, Lawrence Reichard wrote a very informative, scientifically-based letter that speaks to all the issues of sea warming, disturbance of toxics on the sea floor, overuse of fresh water that would impact the precious aquifer, etc. The increase in the temperature of the sea is already impacting lobstermen and sea harvesting. Why add to that trend? Tourism would definitely be affected. Who would want to go to Belfast or Searsport for vacation?? Friends from out of state who frequent Belfast have already said they will never come back to that area if Nordic Aquafarms is built there. Most tourists who are drawn to Maine are lured by the beauty of the environment. Many are real environmentalists. Many are scientists who question your actions!

Lastly, what is the EPA for if not to carefully balance the needs of the environment against the pressure of big business but always place the protection of the environment first. I am disheartened to read that the Maine EPA seems to be placing business interests first and indeed seems to have 'caved'. It is especially foolhardy on this project. The allure may well be false gold given this company's apparent business reputation elsewhere. It is most likely that they will not end up hiring Mainers, but will bring in their own experts.

I understand that Maine has suffered greatly as a result of Covid and its immediate impact on tourism, but in the long term that impact will be relatively short-lived and will rebound once a vaccine is available. What isn't short-lived is the environmental impact of business decisions you all seem a bit too eager to gamble with. Once the shore becomes heavy with algae and the fish populations plummet there will undoubtedly be a permanent impact on tourism. Visitors come for the beautiful scenery, the blue oceans teeming with life, and the culture that brings

them back to 'the way things were' before the whole East coast became ungodly overdeveloped. To those of us who fled those overdeveloped coastal areas, Maine is a rare, even sacred treasure. Please use your scientific training to lobby for the best environmental health and please represent the public's interest by preserving Maine's unique environmental treasures!!!!!!

Sincerely,

  
Kristina Debye