

Maine Board of Environmental Protection
re: NordicAquaFarms.DEP@maine.gov

I attended all of last week's hearings regarding Nordic's Aquafarm's permit application. Thank you for your time and for including public input in the process. One of the statements Nordic often makes is "To feed the world we have to do things differently." It is a dangerous illusion that we can solve global hunger by expanding industrial-scale agriculture. The world already grows more than enough food to feed 10 billion people. Hunger is caused by a scarcity of power - power over land, water, and wealth. Nordic isn't trying to feed the world, they're trying to feed people who can afford expensive fish. They want to do this by digging a giant hole in the Belfast Bay Watershed, then filling that hole with huge concrete and steel machines that require enormous amounts of power and water.

My family has been in Maine for six generations. Mainers are resilient, we can go from snow to freezing rain to heat waves all in the same week. We know how to check in with our neighbors and share what's needed. There are sustainable ways that this grand environment we share can produce healthy food - Nordic's proposal is not one of them.



ALL PHOTOS TAKEN BY SALLY BROPHY FROM THE LITTLE RIVER TRAIL (INCLUDING FUNGI)



For example, Nordic is currently seeking a discharge permit. That permit is literally a license to pollute. Do we really want to go back to the past where building a giant food processing plant beside Belfast Bay was supposed to be the answer to our future prosperity? The crucial need for tax revenue makes the city and state susceptible to corporations promising money. We need to pay for schools and roads and snowplows and the list goes on, but we can't pay for them with smoke and mirrors. As we heard during the hearings, Nordic hasn't even supplied a coherent financial plan. Their answer was "well we need the permits before we'll have any details on our finances." I wish we could buy a business that way - just give me the keys and once I've moved in I'll show you I can pay for it.

Nordic likes to state that the carbon footprint of its product would be less than that of salmon airfreighted from abroad. What happens if the lucrative markets of Boston and New York aren't open to buying Nordic's fish? Then Nordic will ship them wherever they need to in order to sell their product. There are no carbon savings in this misleading statement.

In truth Nordic's factory would be very carbon intensive. Before they even begin to grow land fish they would liquidate a forest and remove the surrounding earth 8 to 20 feet deep. This equals a loss of 13,000 plus metric tons of carbon. Then, the factory would add 550,000 plus metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalents to the atmosphere each year. It will make meeting Belfast's climate targets impossible. It will make meeting state targets extremely difficult.



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Growing food on chemical-intensive, monoculture farms, is quite literally destroying the resource base – soil, water, climate – on which future food production depends. We can not afford business as usual. Now is the time to change these old patterns, and address climate change, by rolling back monopoly power and creating favorable conditions for more localized, resilient, and equitable food systems. Maine can be a leader in this. Our environment is Maine’s most valuable asset. This board, as an independent decision-making authority responsible for the protection of our environment, can safeguard those assets to insure that we can feed our communities in the future.

Sally Brophy

20 Bradbury Street, Belfast, ME 04915 • sallybrophy@icloud.com

