

Burke, Ruth A

From: Penny West <penelope7west@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, February 18, 2020 12:28 PM
To: DEP, Nordic Aqua Farms
Subject: Please think about this carefully; we did it with chickens and it messed up the Bay

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This is a comment of deep concern about the damage Nordic Aqua Farms will do to Penobscot Bay.

I came to the Belfast area in 1979. Chickens were king. We had two chicken processing plants, a grain silo at the end of the street, feathers drifted about like snow, A woman's hair got caught in a conveyor belt and she was pulled to her death into some machine. I adopted a run away chicken who was so mentally damaged she lived out her life in my lilac tree. Chickens living in towers of wire cages, shitting on each others heads. Thw amonia! PTS. Delicious, not.

Even with the chickens, Belfast was on hard times: three hardware store, two used furniture stores, some empty store fronts lined Main street. We were run down at the heel, and no amount of tugging our the boot straps would get us back into the modern world. Even the chickens were heading to Maryland with Mr. Purdue. The WWII plan for returning soldiers to become chicken farmers was petering out.

The Harbor, the pilings, the mudflats, the fishing had all been negatively impacted by the off flow of the chicken and sardine processing plants. Belfast is the head of Penobscot Bay. The flow of the Passy and the work of the tides were unable to flush the offal off shore. The harbor was coated in chicken fat. No one in their right mind would moor an expensive boat here. The harbor was very quiet.

Why do people think that that almost 8,000,000 gallons of semi-polluted, nitrogen rich water a day won't do the same thing to our now beautiful harbor? I don't know the volume of off flow from the chicken plants, but I doubt it reached 7.7 million gallons a day.

The niche stores, the art galleries, the Front Street boatyard, the restaurants, the tour boats, the large working boats, the top end pleasure boats from all over the world that come to us as a destination, and even the people who have moved here to retire will find their investments in the community were bad ones. Not to mention the tourists.

I ran a business in Belfast and we relied on tourists to boost our sales over the summer so we could keep our staff year round. Ruin the harbor and tourist zoom past us on the by pass and take their dollars elsewhere.

My Norwegian son-in-law assured me that Norwegian businessmen are like any other business men, and do not hold themselves to a higher standard. They might wear better clothes. How many Norwegian fjords have been sullied by their salmon farming? The record will show it is more than several.

Now the Nordic Aqua Farms come here as if we were a third world country to take our natural resources, provide some low end jobs and be able to move on leaving a mess behind. They aren't Mainers, are they? What does Maine have for its citizens but its location and natural resources?

Who says when the mess is too big? Who gets the money to do the clean up? How do you document and recompense small businesses that might have failed for a variety of reasons, but with the pollution of the Bay as the main underlying economic cause. Will they have the financial resources to fight a legal battle? No, they failed! This is not creating jobs in Belfast. This is kicking the stuffing out of well-meaning people.

To get us out of any mess we might bring down up on our harbor, we may not have a company with clout like MBNA who tidied Belfast up with profits from people who had got themselves into credit card debt. Probably the people who could least afford a loan with 17% interest rate. My taxes in Belfast are higher than my brother's and he lives in Washington, D.C., which is half full of non-tax paying institutions, and a high standard of up keep demanded by our Nation's Capital. Where will we get the money for the clean up? What of our neighbors around Peneobscot Bay? Could they sue us?

The captive fish needs fresh water from three watersheds. Proof that the project is not sized right for the environment.

I fear the environmental damage to the wetlands, mudflats, waters of Penobscot Bay will be a sure thing if Nordic Aqua Farms has its way here in Belfast. It will impact the ocean, the mudflats, the wetlands, and the harbors and literal lands of our neighbors. This project is so large we have no way to predict how it will affect Penobscot Bay.

Thank you,

Penelope West
58 Village Road
Belfast Maine 04915

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