

December 16, 2009

Dear Governor Christine,

I'm writing this because of my concern for Puget Sound. I am 88 years old and still get out on the tide flats most daylight tides. I am appalled at the ever increasing decline of water quality. Our waters are grossly over fertilized.

Many other states are doing everything they can to grow shellfish because of their ability to remove algae. The Army Corp. of Engineers has spent millions of dollars to bring this about in several gulf and east coast states.

It saddens me that for the last 6 or 8 years that all farms and facilities Taylor Shellfish has purchased here been in British Columbia, Hawaii and more recently in California.

This has been brought about by the maze of endless hearings, studies, lawsuits, appeals and delays of any kind. One new mussel farm proposal has gone on for way over 10 years. Even if this gets through the hearing stage we have to lease the land from the state which is problematic especially at a price that is reasonable.

The ~~of~~ Washington Dept. of Health does a good job, consequently our shellfish are in demand not only in this country but over seas as well. We ship to western Europe and several countries in the orient where the demand seems endless.

Puget Sound has tremendous potential for growing shellfish, one of the best in the world. It seems to me like a win win situation, you clean the water, provide jobs and bring in new dollars to the state but sadly it isn't happening.

Sincerely

Justin Taylor

CHRISTINE O. GREGOIRE
Governor



STATE OF WASHINGTON
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

P.O. Box 40002 • Olympia, Washington 98504-0002 • (360) 753-6780 • www.governor.wa.gov

January 25, 2010

Justin Taylor
Taylor Shellfish Company
130 Southeast Lynch Road
Shelton, WA 98584

Dear Justin 

Thank you for your heartfelt letter. I consider you a true Puget Sound pioneer and share your passion and concern for the health of our marine waters.

As former director of the Washington State Department of Ecology and chair of the Puget Sound Water Quality Authority, I charged my staff to dedicate significant resources to cleaning up shellfish growing areas that were in jeopardy of closure in South Sound. Those efforts helped, but the challenge continues.

In 2007, I created the Puget Sound Partnership (PSP) to enhance efforts toward making our treasured Puget Sound healthy for swimming, fishing, and harvesting shellfish. As you know, increased shoreline development, septic systems and stormwater runoff carry significant pollutants, including nitrogen, that bloom over-abundant plankton. One only needs to look at Hood Canal's oversupply of fertilizers and low oxygen condition to realize we are at a balance point.

The value of a healthy shellfish industry is well-documented and represented in the PSP Action Agenda. It highlights the unique attributes of the South Sound and delineates meaningful actions that address issues concurrent with inevitable growth. Efforts focus on long-term protection and stewardship of working shellfish farms to help maintain ecosystem function, sustain quality of life, and improve the viability of rural communities including:

- Establishing No Discharge Zones for commercial and/or recreational vessels.
- Developing and implementing water quality cleanup and management plans to reduce pollutant loads.
- Implementing Shellfish Protection District plans.
- Pursuing funds to implement priority upgrades of municipal and industrial wastewater facilities in urban and urbanizing areas.
- Using advanced wastewater treatment, where needed, in nutrient sensitive and shellfish recoverable areas.



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In so doing, the Action Agenda recognizes that shellfish play an important ecological role in naturally filtering our water and keeping nutrients in balance, and that healthy shellfish growing waters represent one of our best indicators for success. It also recognizes the important role the shellfish industry plays in our local, regional, and national economy by providing vital family-wage natural resource jobs in rural communities.

Frustrations – like those you expressed – with the permitting process are the reason I created the Governor’s Office of Regulatory Assistance (ORA). Knowledgeable staff and online tools are available to guide applicants through the environmental permitting process. ORA continues to work with its regulatory partners to make processes easier and more effective and welcomes any ideas you may have for improvement.

I have also proposed several bills this year that will simplify and speed up appeals processes. Rather than a maze of timeframes, appeals boards and other procedural requirements, I am proposing a single appeal process with one appeal period.

I know you have invested a lifetime in raising quality seafood and instilling a responsible and proactive work ethic in your family-owned company. Thank you for your perseverance and continued partnership in fighting for clean water and a bountiful Puget Sound.

Sincerely,



Christine O. Gregoire
Governor

*Please let me know
if your Taylor family
has ideas to achieve
a clean Puget Sound
and a vibrant
shellfish industry!*