

February 27, 2009

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Subject: Residential Concerns with Taylor Shellfish – Case Inlet

Mr. Doenges,

We have owned a home on the West-side of Case Inlet for ten years, on State Route 302. During that time, we have raised concerns about environmental abuses. The initial concern was with Mr. Reggie Engman who we witnessed poisoning the tidelands with 40-pound bags of lime. Specifically, during extremely low tides, Mr. Engman was making piles of starfish up and down the inlet and then covering the piles with pounds of lime. At that time, a gray whale had been feeding in Case Inlet for more than a month. In addition to killing the star fish and crabs, other marine life was dead and dying all around. At that time I contacted Fish and Wildlife. We were shocked to again witness Mr. Engman using lime the following year. I followed-up with Fish and Wildlife, the water department and several other government agencies. Fish and Wildlife finally determined Mr. Engman's actions represented a Federal offense and could be subject to prosecution, including jail and fines. The result, Mr. Engman was given a warning to cease.

Since that time, Mr. Engman has leased his property to Taylor's Shellfish. This commercial endeavor has grown dramatically with devastating environmental results. Football field size beds of geoducks now run up and down Case Inlet. These fields consist of thousands of individual pvc tubes, small plastic nets used as hoods over each tube, all covered with netting held in place with rebar. The beach is littered with pvc pipe, nylon nets, rubber bands, rubber gloves, etc. Starfish are all but gone, as are most forms of tidal marine life. The tidelands themselves are changing - the sand is more compact, lacking the natural affects from crab, worms and other marine life. These geoduck beds are expanding at alarming rates. Workers are on the beach day and night - using lamps at night; the pump and staging barges and equipment have been moored in front of our property for the past several months and prior to that were moored a short distance down the beach for extended periods of time. The generators are also run for long periods of time.

We have seen eagle tangled in the nets twice, fortunately, they were able to free themselves so far. We have stood by preparing to intervene had it proven necessary.

Concern should also be given to the migrating gray whale feeding habitat - note, we have not seen a gray whale for several years now. Killer whale visit and the harbor porpoise, seal lions, seals, river otters, eagle, osprey, and so much more that are live in and around Case Inlet should be given consideration.

We are aware that the University of Washington was performing studies of the impact of geoduck farming on eel grass, but have not been able to contact them for the results of their research.

We have also been concerned with Taylor's unsafe practice of marking different areas with 20-25 foot pvc pipe (poles) or small trees. We have witnessed a jet skier injured when they drove right into a leaning pole and worry other boaters, water skiers run the risk of further, more significant injury - not to mention the pvc poles are a pollutant, they are simply unsightly and unnecessary in light of GPS technology.

Taylor Shellfish, to our knowledge, has been assigned by DNR to operate the geoduck aquaculture monitoring sites on state aquatic lands.

We are also aware of mooring constraints commencing in April. Specifically... Persons shall not moor or anchor a vessel in the same area on state-owned aquatic lands for periods longer than thirty consecutive days or for more than a total of ninety days in any three hundred sixty-five day period. For purposes of WAC 332-52-155, "in the same area" means within a radius of five miles of any location where the vessel was previously moored or anchored. It is obvious Taylor's does not have the means or standards to moor their equipment in appropriate areas.

We understand the shoreline management act has a preferred single family residences use. We do not believe the elevated level of aquaculture geoduck cultivation brings was anticipated when the law was originally written, whether seen in tubes/nets to gas/diesel generators running at night, to an eagle tangled in net, exhausted and facing certain death from by rising tides.

Watching Taylor's Shellfish operations grow at unprecedented rates, with little or no regard for wildlife, pollution, public safety and private residences convinces us that Taylor Shellfish does not follow best management practices on its private leases.

All said we believe Taylor Shellfish should be precluded from operating on any state tidelands. We also believe the taxes generated by private waterfront residences exceeds the revenue generated by the State sponsored approach to ruining the waters of Puget Sound.

Attached are photographs to demonstrate the extended moorage of these barges.

We request Taylor Shellfish be precluded from leasing state tidelands. If you have any questions please don't hesitate to contact me. We will also be in contact with those organizations involved with protecting Washington State shorelines and other organizations that may be interested in this situation.

Best regards,

Name Withheld