



January 26, 2023

**Chair Golden & Members of the Senate Natural Resources Committee:**

Center for Food Safety supports SB 89 with the -1 amendment, to mirror the Oregon Aquaculture Act introduced in the House, HB 2655. Center for Food Safety (CFS) is a national non-profit member-based organization dedicated to empowering people, supporting farmers, and protecting the environment from industrial agriculture. This mission includes protecting Oregon and the larger Pacific Northwest from the harms of industrial agriculture and aquaculture, work CFS has engaged in for years on behalf of our tens of thousands of members in Oregon.

Oregon is now a magnet for large industrial aquaculture given the bans on marine net pen fish farms on the rest of the West Coast, and the increasing regulation in other aquaculture-heavy countries. These states (CA, WA, and Alaska) and nations (like Norway) have seen the damage that massive fish factory farms can cause to aquatic habitats, wild species, and commercial and recreational wild fisheries.<sup>1</sup> The industrial aquaculture industry has for decades been trying to open our federal waters to floating factory farms, to the detriment of traditional fishermen and women, threatened and endangered species, and the coastal communities that rely on the health of our oceans.<sup>2</sup>

While we do need to feed Oregonians, industrial fish farming is a false promise.<sup>3</sup> Industrial aquaculture is the mass cultivation of fish and shellfish in marine and freshwater. Open water net pens, one of the most-used methods for fin fish, are essentially floating feedlots in open water, which can have devastating environmental and socio-economic impacts. Industrial aquaculture is associated with many environmental and public health concerns, including: the escape of farmed fish into the wild;<sup>4</sup> outcompeting wild fish for habitat, food, and mates or intermixing with wild fish and altering their genetics and behaviors; the spread of diseases and parasites from farmed fish to wild fish and other marine life; and pollution from excess feed, wastes and any antibiotics or other chemicals used flowing through the open pens into natural waters. Industrial aquaculture also significantly affects public health, as antibiotics, pesticides and other chemicals that are heavily used to prevent disease and parasites in industrial aquaculture can accumulate in fish tissues. Countries around the world, and states here in the US have for years learned the toll these floating factory farms can take on aquatic habitats and wild fisheries. We know the risks; it would be unconscionable to wait to do anything until after crisis hits in Oregon. To allow industrial aquaculture to come into our state without safeguards in place would be utterly negligent.

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<sup>1</sup> Isabella Breda, *WA bans commercial net-pen fish farming in state waters*, Seattle Times (Nov. 18, 2022) (enclosed); Sierra Club, *The Promise and Challenge of "Restorative Aquaculture"* (2021) (enclosed); FoodPrint, *The FoodPrint of Farmed Seafood* (2020) (enclosed); CFS, *Ocean-Based Fish Farming: Pollution, Pathogens & Environmental Impacts* (2015) (enclosed); CFS, *The Catch with Seafood: Human Health Impacts of Drugs & Chemical Used by the Aquaculture Industry* (2005).

<sup>2</sup> CFS, Comments on Propose to Reissue and Modify Nationwide Permits, COE-2020-0002 (Nov. 16, 2020) (providing detail on the dangers of offshore open ocean aquaculture) (enclosed).

<sup>3</sup> CFS, *Finfish Aquaculture: A False Solution to Overfishing* (Nov. 2022) (enclosed).

<sup>4</sup> CFS, *Reported Escapes from Fish Farms 1996-2012* (2012) (enclosed).



SB 89-1 would supplement Oregon's existing protections for our environment, including both native fish and the wider aquatic ecosystem and the public interest. It would ban marine net-pens because we know these operations cause some of the worst impacts. It also prohibits growing genetically engineered fish because of the increased danger of novel organisms escaping into our fragile ecosystems. It supplements Oregon Department of Agriculture's authority to ensure that the cumulative effect of shellfish operations in Oregon bays and estuaries is not harmful, and prohibits pesticide use on shellfish (one of the dangerous practices of some oyster and clam growers in Washington state). It further requires humane handling and slaughter for fin fish, based on expert input. SB 89-1 will set Oregon up to avoid the mistakes of the past, including in the aquaculture industry *and* terrestrial farming, while allowing safe and sustainable fish farming to continue and grow.

For these reasons, we ask that the committee set a work session and vote to pass SB 89-1 out of committee with a do-pass recommendation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Amy van Saun", written in a cursive style.

Amy van Saun  
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