

Factor in clean-up costs

Professor Jon Grant (Aug. 15 letter) makes the case for more study of open-pen fish farming. Any study must include the total cost of leaving the area in as pristine condition as it was before the fish farms were introduced. The clean-up of Halifax Harbour cost millions of dollars. Fifty thousand fish in a pen are fed daily and produce feces daily. There is going to be pollution. And there are multiple pens. What will it cost to remediate a harbour?

The professor suggests it might be possible to use shell fish or seaweed to help remediate the area. He can eat the shell fish; I won't.

Added to the problem for anyone living in the vicinity is the noise of the automatic fish feeders, the extra activity and the unsightliness of these pens in a previously natural area.

A very unsettling point in the letter is that some of these operations are still experimental. Isn't that a risk?

I fully appreciate the NIMBY feeling of people who live adjacent to such operations and proposed operations. Cooke and like companies are in the business to make money. Please, not at my expense.

Meanwhile, I will not be eating any farmed salmon. I might even consider boycotting stores that sell it.

Maxwell Pottie, Dartmouth

No one is listening

Dalhousie professor Jon Grant characterizes coastal communities that oppose open-pen fish farms as being alarmist. These residents see, smell, hear and live with aquaculture's negative effects. Real damage is occurring and no one seems to want to admit it.

Dr. Grant speaks of the promising sustainable features of aquaculture, but as with the provincial government, I question whether he understands the true environmental, economic and social intent of sustainability. It is my view that the aquaculture industry is failing miserably with all three of these sustainable values:

Fish farm sites are selected by industry proponents in areas that are not always subject to daily tidal flushing. As a result, sites typically end up being polluted in a very short time.

Fish farms do not pay taxes; they pay paltry annual lease fees. They generate a few jobs, yet they receive huge financial compensation from the province when their stock dies of disease. Remember the \$21 million paid to the Shelburne fish farm?

The anger, resentment and controversy over the aquaculture industry are damaging the rural social fabric of our communities. The province is not assuming a leadership role and mending these sentiments; rather, its bias toward aquaculture is fuelling the fires of discontent.

There is a better way for rural communities, but no one seems to be listening.

Robert Ross, Port Mouton

Pollution not acceptable

There are as many holes in Jon Grant's argument as there are in a fish cage. As a concerned citizen and scientist, I do not have an "agenda," other than environmental protection, and that is true of every group opposed to the pollution from pen fin-fish farms.

Just as the NDP government and Cooke Aquaculture have done, Mr. Grant attempts to create the positive image that pen fin-fish farming is a viable method of aquaculture. It could better be termed "aquapoisson" or "aquadumps."

The revelation that Cooke is contributing to research for better methods of aquaculture is laughable. How much of the \$25 million of taxpayers' money is going toward research and when can we expect appropriate waste-screening processes to be in place? While we wait, the pollution continues, and is increased with the help of Nova Scotia tax dollars so generously contributed by Premier Dexter and the NDP.

Mr. Grant, put on some scuba gear and take a swim under a fish cage. Read everything you can find by Alexandra Morton, a renowned biologist who has been studying the damaging results of fin-fish farms for years. Check out the Friends of Port Mouton Bay website. View the videos by Professor Tom Sherman. Pollution is not acceptable just because a government is looking for votes, and a company is making money and a token contribution to research.

Fred Giffin, Liverpool

Selective about science?

So, the premier was glad to be in attendance with the German chancellor during a science tour at Dalhousie on Thursday. I wish that he would give as much credence and respect to the great scientific research of that same institution connected with Dal that has been proving the damage and destruction caused in Nova Scotia water by open-pen fish farms, including some new discoveries of serious copper pollution.

Beverley Burlock, Port Mouton