

January 3, 2005

Ministry of Water, Land & Air Protection
P.O. Box 9377 Stn Prov Govt
Victoria, B.C.
V8W 9M1

Attention: Barb McGrenere
Public Safety & Prevention Initiatives

Re: Letter dated December 16, 2004

We can only comment that we were extremely disappointed and deeply upset with the government's decision to allow the issuing of a Permit to Sablefin Hatcheries Ltd. for a waste system.

To put it bluntly, it really, "blows our minds" that a Permit like this would be granted. It seems abundantly obvious to us that using the tombolo, which is a recognized sensitive ecosystem, is not the appropriate choice for the waste system proposed.

Our Government and its' officials, charged with the special duty to care for the public good, talk often about, "Protection of our environment." All too often we get simple lip service. As citizens we are concerned about the lack of honesty and integrity in both our politicians and in the public service bureaucrats responsible for the long term care of our public treasures. Our birds, wildlife and fisheries are only supported by a tiny amount of remaining habitat. They are under siege and are being eroded every day by short sighted business interests, which, by their very nature, are only self-serving. Business cannot and does not serve the public good. They serve only the interest of their shareholders. They are motivated only by profit, and they cannot serve two masters. Serving the public good is the role of government. Remember, "...of the people, by the people, for the people?"

Business must be held to a higher standard, else all is lost. Now, more than ever before, government must embrace and protect the public's remaining heritage. Once that critical edge is reached where the remaining ecosystem and balance of nature is breached, then it is our personal view that all inter-related systems will collapse. Permanently. Just like our east coast fisheries have done and where efforts to recover the fishery has failed. Just like so many forested and grassland regions in Canada where multiple species have been driven to extinction. All across America. All around the world. These are losses to all of mankind. These natural calamities have happened because business doesn't care and because governments like ours have not been held accountable. They have not protected the public trust.

We ask, "Are you now protecting the public trust with your decision to provide a waste disposal permit to Sablefin Hatcheries Ltd?" If you must proceed, have you considered low impact alternatives? Has anything but superficial evaluation been done to project the future impact to the natural balance of the area by such an explosion of waste water and effluent into the local ecosystem through the tombolo. We think not! We would like to

be convinced with clear and detailed information that truly supports a decision to proceed. This would provide us with a conviction of proof rather than simple platitudes like you state in your letter of December 16th, "...your comments, in addition to all other information available to us were taken into consideration..."

We ask you, "When is the government ever going to take a stand against the lopsided business interests?" Make business responsible to serve in part, the interests of the public when they are using and impacting public land, air and water. Business must adapt to the environment and its needs, instead of the environment always being compromised with projects such as this.

What about other related issues?

Not only are we dealing with a sensitive ecosystem we are looking at a first nations burial site/registered archaeological site. We can only wonder how disappointed, even humiliated the Penelakut must have felt when they received this news. We wonder what would happen if one of the historical cemeteries in Victoria was dug up and replaced with a similar waste disposal site. Of course, this is ridiculous. This would never be considered! It would never happen! The public outcry would bring down the local and provincial governments. It would bring down the heavens. Where a similar desecration involves our much maligned first nations people, we can "justify" such self righteous decisions by simply stating, "They do not use that site today." and other self serving statements quoted, "Where is the proof that it is a site that was ever used?"... by the Penelakut.

The elders of the Penelakut state clearly that Walker Hook is an historical tribal burial site. This should be given serious and careful recognition as a truth. If we must question the matter then do so with respect. Give credence to historical events of our provinces past. Take appropriate measures to ensure we are not once again trampling on the rights of our original native peoples.

It is very disheartening that our government ruling on this matter appears so "racist" in tone and innuendo that honest decisions still cannot be made between first nations rights and the overbearing, all encompassing right of business.

Because of these reasons we believe the government has failed in its primary duty of care to the public of British Columbia, and that, no matter what the current justifications stated in the ruling, it is very inappropriate to give a permit for waste disposal at this site.

Considering the next step.

We know the tombolos value historically and environmentally is far to great to put it at risk by using it for a waste disposal site. So, it seems obvious to us that Sablefin should be ordered out of the Tombolo!

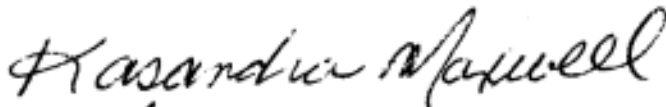

In this day and age we are sure there are other waste systems such as an outfall system that they could put to use. We would suggest that Sablefin put on their thinking caps and come up with a better suggestion. One that has the local area support, or at least shows

some respect for the very obvious local concerns. The government must challenge Sablefin to live up to its civic duty to be a good neighbour and an appropriate community partner to balance the needs of the community and of industry. In so doing, then all parties will show respect for the ecosystem involved as well as the Penelakut and First Nations.

We are not against business. We are business people ourselves and embrace the need for progress and change. We are simply against bad business, which does not adequately consider the long term public trust of which our environment is a treasured part.

Sincerely,

Kasandra Maxwell B.Ed.
Don Maxwell R.I.B.C.
Concerned Citizens

cc Gordon Campbell
cc Saltspring Island Residents of Responsible Land Use