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Re: Issuance of permanent waste disposal permit to Sablefin Hatchery Ltd.

A youth spent fossicking amongst the bleached white driftwood, seaweed covered rocks and eelgrass beds of Walker Hook set the seed for me becoming a scientist and it is with great interest and sadness that I follow the Sablefin Hatchery project. There are examples of aquaculture projects worldwide that are admirable in their attempts to mitigate their negative environmental impacts, however this project is not one of them. Given the extreme ecological and cultural sensitivity of Walker Hook it is shameful that a full environmental impact assessment was not a prerequisite for this development. The news that Sablefin Hatchery is now applying for a permanent waste management permit when the environmental baseline studies that will enable us to determine the present and future impacts of this project are still lacking is incomprehensible.

Here in Australia, finfish aquaculture projects are being abandoned because of the growing body of scientific evidence demonstrating their detrimental impacts to the environment, other finfish, baitfish and even to human health. Finfish aquaculture is a risky business. The risk for Sablefin Hatchery has been compounded by choosing to situate their project on one of the most ecologically sensitive, culturally significant and aesthetically stunning sites on the BC coast. I urge you to protect Walker Hook from further destruction and not issue a permanent waste management permit for this project until all environmental, community and heritage concerns have been addressed.

Yours Sincerely,

Tara Martin, Ph.D.

Ecologist

The University of Queensland,

Brisbane, Australia