

October 7, 2022

To King County (KC)

We are writing as owners of Blue Dot Sea Farm, a commercial seaweed and shellfish farm located in north Hood Canal. We are (Jonathan Kroman), a former corporate finance lawyer and angel investor and (Joth Davis) a researcher, marine farmer and shellfish biologist for over thirty years working on the water cultivating shellfish and more recently seaweeds over this timeframe. The seaweed (and shellfish) is a viable commercial farm, selling sugar kelp and oysters into different market channels. We have had many contacts over the last six years with aspiring seaweed farmers, including two individuals proposing seaweed farms in King County around Vashon Island.

Mr. Mike Spranger (SPARO Aquatics) has proposed to establish a seaweed farm on the southwest side of Vashon Island, I have recently learned that KC is considering the application and is potentially proposing an experimental designation for the project, based on a determination made by a consultant working with you. An experimental designation will have the effect of significantly dampening the economic viability of the project as a result of reduced scope (5 acre as opposed to 10 acre as proposed) and especially lease duration (3 years vs. 10 years as proposed) that Mr. Spranger can achieve. An experimental designation will simply reduce this project to minimal viability unless SPARO Aquatics has more certainty in its capacity to grow as a new venture.


My sense in corresponding with Mr. Spranger is that KC is concerned about the viability of seaweed farming in Puget Sound, notwithstanding the fact that farming seaweeds is practiced successfully the world over including in the United States (Maine and Alaska). Blue Dot Sea Farm is in fact the only commercial seaweed farm currently in Washington State. The reason we are the only open water seaweed farm is due mainly to the extremely high permitting hurdles placed on open water aquatic farm applications generally in WA State. In fact, there is nothing experimental about what we are doing. Cultivating seaweed is both easy and straight forward - so any information supplied by your consultant on the potential viability of a seaweed project could not be based on either fact or practice. We use cultivation practices that have been in play for many years for farms all over the world. There is nothing experimental about what we are doing and we have proven the viability of Salish Sea waters for cultivating sugar kelp. Yes, seaweed farms are rare in WA State, but this fact should not be construed as therefore the practice of cultivating seaweeds is in some way experimental or risky. I urge you to reach out to the King County Executive, Mr. Dow Constantine, who made a visit to our farm this past summer to learn firsthand about the viability and potential for our operation. I also urge you to reach out and discuss your concerns directly with me should this be useful in making your determination. Mr. Spranger has done his homework, in our opinions. Mr Spranger's proposed farm should be permitted post haste so that SPARO Aquatics can initiate operations.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



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Jonathan Kroman