Dear Mr. Buckholt,

I write in support of Protecting Henderson Inlet. I oppose shoreline permit #2022103702.

The reasons for my opposition to the proposed permit for aquaculture on parcel 93000100000 are encapsulated in the following three meaningful events, followed by specific concerns. Thank you for considering my viewpoint.

Event one, June 2022:

We slide paddles, a duffle bag with water, and a VHF radio onto the trampoline of our catamaran. The rigging works. The sail sits in its track, ready to hoist. We balance the boat on wheels to roll it across the beach to the water. Boat in, sail up, water to our thighs, salt air in our lungs, we leave land as we lunge onto the trampoline. Wind draws us out into the inlet, but we notice the starboard rudder isn't locking down. We hobble back toward shore.

"It's low tide day at David's (9505 Johnson Pt Lp NE is one of the nine homes the permit adjoins)," I say. Kids and teachers with backpacks, notepads, and cameras gather annually to study the beach and shore. Today, as we drift near, I count forty-five or fifty. Many carry wooden frames. The seagrasses, juvenile crabs, pinto abalone, silver dollars, and sand-verbena moths are too much to take in all at once, but when viewed through the wooden frames, one square foot at a time, each comes into clear view.

The wind, waves, current, and inability to steer land us near a small group of the young scientists.

"Hi! We're here for a minute to work on the rudder. Great day! Making good discoveries? George shouts.

The kids are in study mode and hardly notice us despite our tall sail of five colors. They kneel on a plush jetty of life. I hear the teacher say, "Algae captures carbon," as his voice disappears in the wind. Something about the greenhouse effect and the balance of algae to feed the native species. Above the sound of the lapping waves, I hear, "Algae and plankton produce half the oxygen for the oceans on earth. Nine out of ten species listed as endangered or threatened within Puget Sound spend at least some of their lives here on the nearshore."

What they are experiencing tugs at me. I also want to learn and hear their observations and questions, but I can't choose to stay. The blue body of water and the deep blue body of sky are our destinations this day now that our rudder works. In that sky, we hear the piping notes of eagles. Four are aloft together, two bald, two not, soaring directly overhead. Up the beach, one of the men, probably David himself, points inland toward some tall cedars. He's indicating he'll show them the nest on the way out.

Little did we know, in a few short months, he'd have to tell them that studying nature here is no longer possible. Also, boats won't be able to think about coming ashore here much of the time.

Event two, August 2022:

We save a night in August each year when the crescent moon sets early to go out on the shore for nature's fantastic bioluminescence show. This time, as we step across a footbridge to reach our rowboat, we startle five sea otters who'd tucked themselves underneath for the night. They are stunned into plunging into the stream, out of reach. We are stunned into crossing the bridge as fast as our pounding hearts can activate our legs. The otters have streamlined shapes we don't see any more than you see a window.

Soon, we're out on the water amidst the wild bioluminescence. The sight of it empties our lungs. It lights up each paddle stroke, leaving a trail behind our boat. We're about as far as David's house (in the middle of the proposed development), hugging the water's edge, when we notice that even the clams on the shore are illuminated. They are a raccoon's midnight snack.

On the way back to our shore, we float across the most thrilling part of all – all the little forage fish, about three feet down, are lit up too. Their long, curved, and zagged paths darting all around put us in a daze. We want to drift forever, basking in the silent show beneath.

To put an exclamation point on the night, the longest and fieriest falling star of our lives streaks across the sky.

We can't stop saying, "What a night! What a night! What a night!" Not realizing this would be the last year, we would float and paddle, willy-nilly, on and off the shore's edge under the season's darkest sky.

Whether day or night, summer or winter, the nearshore draws me to it not so much to learn how to live as, frankly to forget about it. That is, I don't think I can learn from a wild raccoon how to live – shall I open a shell to suck out the soft insides? Shall I walk with my footprints offset by the prints of my hands? - but I might learn something of mindlessness and something about the dignity of living.

Event three, October 2022:

At the end of our three-year-old granddaughter's first boat ride, we arrive back to shore. I step off the boat into very shallow water. I lift her out, holding her tight – I don't want to fall. The sticky mud tries to suck my water shoes off my feet. I work to unstick them with each step, then begin to relax slightly, knowing the beach ahead will soon become firm land. A great blue

heron floats down off a willow branch to the shore to the north. It catches my eye. I swivel slightly – and the next instant, we're down. The mud slops in our faces. Now it's our hands and knees that are stuck.

I failed, but it's not cold. When we give up fighting it, we sit. We smile about our mucky predicament and wait for help. The heron doesn't care, seeming to prefer to balance on one foot.

I'll remember that fall as long as I live. I think it made its mark on our granddaughter too. Every time she sees me, she tells me the story about that funny time we fell into the mud together.

Meaningful events like these happen all the time across our waterways, especially at our shorelines. Though I am the current taxpayer of the home at 9105 Otis Beach St NE, which is ten residences south of the proposed development, I acknowledge these are ancestral lands of the Noo-She-Chatl band of the Squaxin Tribe. All who are not Salish peoples are visitors here. As a visitor, I commit to restoring this living world around us. Please help us preserve it for perpetuity.

The shellfish industry devalues properties because of reduced access, noise, and aesthetics. Before purchasing a home on Otis Beach, my husband and I searched for years. We chose it for its pristine location, at a higher price, supposedly higher valued, over other locations with nearby industrial shellfish operations. One home, in particular, was our choice until, before signing our offer, we drove out at 5:30 a.m. to listen and look. At 5:45 a.m., we heard noisy diesel engine-powered boats arriving from such a distance that it took them twenty minutes to get there, louder by the minute. We saw the ugly raft that sat solitary on our other visits, getting

heavy use as it was loaded and offloaded by various vessels, each with motors of different speeds as if it was a beehive. We saw workers and huge amounts of materials up on the beach, at the home we thought would be our place if we could purchase it, which we no longer had any interest in.

Speaking of ugly, low tides happen during the nighttime in winter, but in spring and summer, when human recreation and enjoyment of the shore is at its highest, low tides occur during daylight hours. The tubes or bags and nets are visible 20% of the time during spring and summer when people are outside to see them.

Geoduck farming disrupts mudflat animal communities. Totten Inlet homeowners report muddy waters and disappeared fish. The high concentrations of geoducks deplete the same food forage fish rely on, such as plankton. They wonder how repeatedly liquefying beaches to harvest geoducks affect the creatures that dwell in the substrate.

Sean McDonald, an ecologist at the University of Washington, says flatfish do not fare well with netting because it makes it harder for them to forage amid the dense infrastructure. Besides flatfish, his team also sees the potential for a decline in salmon. They find that increased geoduck farming in south Puget sound could reduce populations of herons and eagles. Scientists see a solid need to study seabirds because the burgeoning aquaculture might affect them most. Modeling suggests that increased farming will bring a serious cumulative effect. Winter ducks are observed to be in decline here. Why?

Geoduck farming introduces plastic pollution to the sound's waters. Washington State is unique in allowing PVC tubes. We are the only place that allows them.

On the one hand, we're spending billions to restore salmon, eelgrass, and forage fish in Puget Sound, but we lose against that every time another farm goes in. Geoduck farming catalyzes ecosystem-wide chain reactions that affect everything from seabirds to salmon. It encroaches on underwater vegetation. It is yet another stressor on an ecosystem already being pressured by the weight of human infrastructure.

Which science do you believe is corrupt? The science that tells us there is zero impact and claims due diligence already in studying the new industry of intertidal geoduck farming? Or the science that says the cumulative effect is still unknown and there is strong potential for additive, synergistic effects of repeated widespread harvests?

All this for a 6500-mile journey for the luxury markets in China, Hong Kong, Korea, and Vietnam. If they must be grown for this lucrative market, then at least move geoduck farming from the intertidal zone to the seafloor, where habitat is less sensitive.

Respectfully submitted in support of Protecting Henderson Inlet,

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