

From: [William Reus](#)
To: [Sonja Cady](#); [Ronald Smith](#); [William Reus](#)
Subject: Thurston Co. Hearing January 9, 2024
Date: Tuesday, January 2, 2024 6:07:47 PM

Sent from [Mail](#) for Windows

To: Land Use Clerk, Sonja Cady

From: William Reus, Adjacent Property Owner

Regarding: Taylor/Mazanti Geoduck SSDP 2022103702

Request for five minute testimony on January 9, 2024 and to have this document submitted into the record

I want to thank the Thurston County Hearing Examiner for allowing me to present my objections to the Taylor/Mazanti Geoduck SSDP # 2022103702. I am William Reus, an adjacent property owner. I am opposed to geoduck aquaculture at this near shore site. I am not opposed to non geoduck aquaculture in general. I have been associated with the organization Protect Henderson Inlet since its founding.

To move my objection from the realm of personal preference to more solid foundation, I want to bring up two arguments. The first focuses on the program designed to apply state law to the local shoreline, the Shoreline Master Program (SMP). My assertion is that this Taylor/Mazanti project does not adhere to the stated goal of the 1990 Shoreline Master Program and therefore should be denied. The complete text of the SMP's goal is one sentence, "... to preserve to the fullest possible extent the scenic, aesthetic and ecological qualities of the Shoreline of the Thurston Region in harmony with those uses which are deemed essential to the life and well-being of its citizens." Clearly preserving scenic and aesthetic qualities is best done by leaving nature alone. Phases of geoduck aquaculture that use PVC pipe and predator netting, or hydraulic wands and prevent people from enjoying the natural beach are objectively not aesthetically pleasing.

But we must consider the second part of the sentence. Uses that are essential to the life and well-being of Thurston Region citizens should be embraced in so far as they can be brought into harmony. Is geoduck aquaculture in Henderson Inlet essential to the life and well-being of the citizens? I say, no. Does it supply a source of food to the Thurston Region? Most geoducks are exported by air freight to Asia. So, no. Does the process provide a significant number of well-paid jobs? I suspect not. Does it supply dollars through property taxes for local services such as schools? In 2023 this Mazanti parcel paid \$183 in tax. Compare this to the 14 adjacent homeowners (most opposing the project) who collectively paid over \$200,000 in property taxes in 2023 (a ratio of 1100:1). Does geoduck aquaculture improve the environment in some less visible way? To the contrary, in making the nearly 6,500 mile journey from SeaTac to Hong Kong, 5231 kg of CO2 per ton of geoduck is added to the atmosphere. This multiplies the carbon footprint of the product by 5-10 fold compared to other locally consumed clams. So, no. Geoduck aquaculture in Henderson Inlet fails to meet the goals of the SMP.

Here I might digress on the choice of the word "harmony". The relationship between homeowners and shellfish growers might better be described as "discord" and "regulatory imbalance". Consider the County's creation of the Henderson Inlet Shellfish Protection District in 2003. Homeowners carry the costs and experience the intrusive monitoring for the benefit of shellfish grower's product and

profits.

My second argument is based on science. The rate of expansion of geoduck aquaculture in the Thurston Region ignores preliminary cautionary science published nearly a decade ago. The study found in the 2015 Journal of Marine Science with lead author Bridget Ferriss was described as one of the first major scientific studies “to examine the broad, long-term ecosystem effects of geoduck aquaculture in Puget Sound.” The investigators model predicted that geoduck biomass could double without bringing about an imbalance. At somewhat higher levels though (120% increase) the population of other species in the ecosystem would start to change. Resident and migratory eagles, great blue heron and other birds could be expected to decrease.

Where are we now in the expansion of geoduck in South Puget Sound? In 2012 the reported harvest was 1.1 million pounds. I’m not sure what the number was in 2023. A calculation can be made. If we assume near shore permits on private land have added 19 new sites and a total of 35 acres in recent years and if 42,000 natal tubes are added per acre, with 3-4 young geoduck per tube, and a survival rate of 50% with a growth to 3 pounds over a 7 year cycle that averages to 1.1 million pounds per year. Note that this number represents a doubling of geoduck production in a decade. This growth is nearing the biomass that affects other species by the model used in Bridget Ferriss’ article.

A related point is that studies from the last decade in South Puget Sound, that is, follow up studies have not been done. We should place the approval of more shoreline geoduck aquaculture permits on pause while information is gathered from the scientific community.

The content of this presentation was altered to fit within the allowed time.

Thank you