

To: Thurston County Community Planning & Economic Development, Joshua Cummings, Director

From: William and Sherry Reus

Date: November 21, 2022

Re: Public comments on Project no. 2022103702

Attn: Ron Buckholt

THURSTON COUNTY  
RECEIVED

DEC 05 2022

BUILDING DEVELOPMENT CENTER

The purpose of this letter is to voice opposition to the proposed project as part of invited public comments on the permit process. We are homeowners within 500 feet of the project and consider ourselves stakeholders. We hope to influence the County away from approving this application submitted by Erin Ewald on behalf of Taylor Shellfish.

As a homeowner in the Johnson Point/ Otis Beach/ Henderson Inlet area, what we value is what we are concerned is at risk -the pristine natural environment of this area. The elements of this pristine area include: 1) The views of Dana Passage and largely undeveloped Harstine Island 2) The peaceful and quiet area at the tip of Johnson Point and 3) The clean salt water.

We believe all our neighbors in this area value these elements. They enjoy activities such as kayaking from the beach, raising their own oysters or walking the shore with kids or grandkids. None of us own this land in perpetuity. We are stewards of the land for a while and want to preserve its character. We see a succession of homeowners with a common interest.

One of these elements, clean water, requires more active management. Failing septic systems are a threat. The County actively regulates these to a high standard compared to non-waterfront homes. The homeowner funds the preservation of clean water at no small cost.

The clean water is a costly and intensely managed element of this pristine area. The shellfish grower is attracted by the cleanliness. Their commercial enterprise stands to passively benefit if this permit is successful. They haven't contributed to the local water quality. In the process they risk damaging the view and quiet. Here we are specifically referring to the geoduck harvesting process. We believe that the shellfish grower will bring in boats with compressors, pumps and intercom systems. They will use these to disrupt the floor of the Sound while harvesting their product. Plastic debris such as predator net and PVC pipe will be left behind.

A second element, the view, is clearly enjoyed daily by our neighbors and ourselves. We are also taxed on our view. Few, however, would choose to give up the scene in front of them for tax relief. The shellfish grower may not be indifferent to the view, but they are in the area for the commercial enterprise. The view doesn't add value to their product the way clean water does. Their presence arguably detracts from the view. Geoduck harvesting interrupts the quiet.

The homeowner and shellfish grower are at odds. A succession of homeowners has been here for decades. They value the pristine area. They have invested in the elements of the pristine area and have contributed to tax revenue. They are a community.

Where do the homeowners turn for protection of their community on the pristine waterfront from a clash with commercial interests? Zoning has been a tool of local government to segregate incompatible activities and to separate residential from commercial. If the permitting process favors the Shellfish Grower, tensions may arise. We look to the County and zoning-type considerations to preserve the pristine character of this small Johnson Point/ Otis Beach/ Henderson Inlet community from geoduck harvesting-based disruptions. We hope the County will deny this Shoreline Substantial Development Permit.

Homeowners	Shellfish Growers
Established in the area for decades as a Community	New to the immediate area for the purpose of growing a product
Contributed resources to local clean water	Passively benefitting from local clean water resources
Value the natural view	Arguably diminishing the view
Value the peace and quiet	Disrupt the quiet
Contribute significantly to the tax flow based on this area	Contribute to the economy of the region

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