

From: [Sam Smith](#)
To: [Sonja Cady](#)
Subject: Written Statement of Opposition to be Read Aloud at Tuesday 1/9 Hearing: #2022103702 Taylor Shellfish/Manzanita Geoduck SSDP
Date: Monday, January 8, 2024 1:11:37 PM

Dear Ms. Cady,
Please find below my written statement regarding project #2022103702 (Taylor Shellfish/Manzanita Geoduck SSDP), pertaining to the 11:00 hearing tomorrow, Tuesday 1/9. **In my absence, please ensure that the following statement is read aloud into the record on January 9 during my allotted 5-minute appearance, and that it is appropriately filed.**

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January 8, 2024

To the Thurston County Hearing Examiner,

I'm writing as a concerned citizen to express my **strong opposition** to the proposed aquaculture project #2022103702 (Taylor Shellfish/Manzanita Geoduck SSDP) on Henderson Inlet.

Having grown up on Henderson Inlet, I have witnessed firsthand the deepening ecological footprint of human development on the South Puget Sound. Native birds of numerous species are in decline. In spite of the best efforts of environmentally minded policymakers, there are fewer and fewer native fish. And as the region continues to undergo rapid economic expansion, the pressures on fragile and irreplaceable ecological environments grow greater, calling for vigilance and careful oversight on the part of our community members and government regulators alike.

The facts here are simple: the proposed geoduck production site on Henderson Inlet advances the economic interests of a single corporation—Taylor Shellfish—over and against the needs of the community where it will be sited. This is demonstrated with resounding clarity by the public comments uploaded to the Thurston County Hearing Examiner's Project Records for today's hearing. As of 3:00 p.m. the day before the hearing, there are dozens of public comment letters associated with this case, dating from December 2022 to present. NOT A SINGLE ONE voices support for this project. On the contrary, every single letter I read voices opposition to the project based on a range of firsthand observations, from beachfront litter and nighttime noise to habitat destruction, property-line incursions, and obstacles to owner access. Above all, through these letters runs an abiding concern that the proposed geoduck project will bring about irreparable damage to the wild, beautiful Puget Sound we call home, along with the livelihoods that depend on it.

Taylor Shellfish, in a letter from their general council dated January 2023, purports to respond to many of these community concerns, but in fact it sidesteps the most important questions. In particular, as others testifying today will demonstrate, their claims that the available scientific research supports the ecological sustainability of their project are nonsense at best, and intentionally misleading at worst. **The existing research is in reality inconclusive when it comes to the long-term impacts of geoduck farming** in terms of mechanical habitat

destruction from harvest, impacts on eelgrass and other species (both within the shellfish farm and nearby), pollution from plastics (both visible and microscopic), genetic harm to local shellfish stock from interbreeding, disruption of adjacent smelt spawning sites, and more.

Again, I want to underscore that as of this writing, I can find no available public comment that supports this project; a stark division here is drawn, pure and simple, between the interests of local communities and those of a fundamentally self-interested industry that, in spite of its protestations to the contrary, has **insufficient scientific evidence to justify placing at risk the natural beauty and abundance of our community.**

**I urge you to decline Taylor's application for this permit.** We must set a higher bar for projects that may have unforeseen impacts on the fragile natural systems on which we all rely, and which are so unanimously opposed. As we have learned so painfully well, it is far harder to rebuild ecological diversity and resilience than it is to preserve it in the first place. **Please do not allow Taylor to roll the dice on the future of Henderson Inlet.** Our families, livelihoods, and communities are worth more than that.

Sincerely,

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