

Wood, Gregg

From: David Bean - NOAA Federal <david.bean@noaa.gov>
Sent: Monday, October 29, 2018 1:02 PM
To: Wood, Gregg
Cc: Wende Mahaney (Wende_Mahaney@fws.gov); Julie Crocker
Subject: [EXTERNAL SENDER] Re: FW: Whole Oceans - Proposed Draft MEPDES Permit
Attachments: Comments on ME0037478 Proposed Whole Oceans discharge permit for land based commercial aquaculture facility 10-29-2018 (1).docx

Hi Gregg,

Thanks for the opportunity to review the draft MEPDES permit for the proposed Whole Oceans facility in Bucksport, Maine.
Please find comments from NOAA Fisheries attached.

Dave

On Mon, Oct 1, 2018 at 8:09 AM Wood, Gregg <Gregg.Wood@maine.gov> wrote:

From: Wood, Gregg
Sent: Friday, September 28, 2018 3:26 PM
To: 'rpiasio@wholeoceans.com' <rpiasio@wholeoceans.com>; 'William Taylor' <wtaylor@pierceatwood.com>; Trasko, Clarissa <Clarissa.Trasko@maine.gov>; Mitchell, Lori <Lori.Mitchell@maine.gov>; 'houlihan.damien@epa.gov' <houlihan.damien@epa.gov>; 'Weitzler, Ellen' <Weitzler.Ellen@epa.gov>; 'Puleo, Shelley' <puleo.shelly@epa.gov>; 'Vega, Marelyn' <Vega.Marelyn@epa.gov>; 'pastrana-del-valle.solanch@epa.gov' <pastrana-del-valle.solanch@epa.gov>; DMR, EnvironmentalReview <EnvironmentalReview.DMR@maine.gov>; IFWEnvironmentalreview <IFWEnvironmentalreview@maine.gov>; Walsh, Michele <Michele.Walsh@maine.gov>; Leyden, Kathleen <Kathleen.Leyden@maine.gov>; 'david.bean@noaa.com' <david.bean@noaa.com>; 'wende_mahaney@fws.gov' <wende_mahaney@fws.gov>; 'laury_zicari@fws.gov' <laury_zicari@fws.gov>; 'waybackhomestead@yahoo.com' <waybackhomestead@yahoo.com>; 'Andrew Stevenson' <andrewsteve@icloud.com>
Cc: Kavanah, Brian W <Brian.W.Kavanah@maine.gov>; Witherill, Donald T <Donald.T.Witherill@maine.gov>; Loyzim, Melanie <Melanie.Loyzim@maine.gov>; Madore, David <David.Madore@maine.gov>
Subject: Whole Oceans - Proposed Draft MEPDES Permit

Good afternoon all:

Attached is a proposed draft MEPDES permit for a new land based recirculating aquaculture facility that will be owned and operated by Whole Oceans LLC. The facility will be located at the former Verso Paper pulp & paper mill site in the town of Bucksport, Maine. Beginning today, Friday, September 28, 2018, the draft permit is being made available for a 30-day public comment period. Written comments should be submitted to my attention on or before **Monday, October 29, 2018**. Failure to submit comments in a timely fashion may result in the final permit being issued as drafted. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

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Comments from NOAA Fisheries on draft discharge permit (ME0037478) for a proposed land based commercial Recirculating Aquaculture System (RAS) aquaculture facility (Whole Oceans).

Permit Special Conditions I. Use of Drugs for Disease Control

Compliance with this special condition should also include an applicable aquaculture monitoring program and biosecurity plan for the facility. Ultimately, best management practices for the facility should include measures to eliminate introducing or spreading any pathogens to the environment.

Specifically, the plan should include pathogen containment or control measures in the wastewater discharge. Disinfection of wastewater before discharging is necessary to avoid transferring any pathogens harbored in the facility into the environment. Introducing a listed pathogen of concern that may transfer a disease to an ESA listed wild Atlantic salmon population residing in the Penobscot river should not be authorized through this discharge permit. The permit should require the facility to operate in a manner to eliminate the discharge of any pathogens into the wild. There is currently sufficient technology to effectively disinfect any existing pathogens that could be found in the wastewater stream of this proposed salmon culture facility before discharging. I would recommend a requirement for a water treatment system that could provide effective treatment for eliminating all known fish pathogens (bacterial and viral). Furthermore, since these pathogens could also be found in the solids discharge, I would recommend including requirements for disinfection by thermal processing or other effective treatments for disinfection of solids before disposal into the environment.

Special conditions for the protection of Atlantic salmon

Compliance with this special condition includes the development of Containment Management Plans (CMS) to eliminate the escape of cultured fish into the receiving environment. This requirement describes a two and three barrier system with monitoring at Critical Control Points to ensure effective containment within the facility. Furthermore, reporting *all known escapes* is very important to protect the critically endangered population of Atlantic salmon in the Penobscot river. This condition should include submission of a CMS plan to the Services for review and approval prior to issuing a discharge permit for this facility.

The facility should have requirements to eliminate impingement and entrainment of fish on the facility intake because of the operation of this RAS facility. This condition should include requirements for operational travelling screens on the intake structure that are of appropriate size to eliminate impingement and entrainment of juvenile fish; properly maintained and monitored regularly to eliminate mortality. Regular monthly inspections of this system should be a requirement of this permit.

In the event the anticipated risks to the ESA listed Atlantic salmon GOM DPS population from this facility increases as a result of improperly designed, operated or inadequate protective measures in place; the Services reserve the right to require additional conditions such as marking of fish to identify the facility, AND/OR rearing only North American origin populations to reduce the impacts from escapes.