

KOHALA FISH FARM - STATE MUST ADDRESS RISKS, COMMUNITY

Nine out of every 10 pounds of harvested fish will be shipped out of Hawai'i, from the fish farm planned off North Kohala. Two pounds of feed will be shipped in to produce each pound of farm fish. Some 1,200,000 pounds of fish a year, 20-plus jobs, and returns for investors is all Hawai'i will gain. What will we risk?

Twelve cages, each 30 yards across, will float untethered 1,300 feet deep, dependent on new propulsion technology to hold them against currents, storms and tsunamis.

Disease from farm fish, caged off from culling by predators, may cause epidemics in wild fish. Drugs and antibiotics may not help, since residues may linger in the fish, and spread into the ocean from fish droppings. Vaccines take years to develop.

Two hundred fifty acres of public ocean waters will be used for private profit. More's coming — Hawai'i is the only state that allows ocean leasing. Two existing fish farms plan expansion. Three more may start up.

We urge that upcoming hearings for a Conservation District Use Permit be held in West Hawai'i and well publicized. We urge that the state address all risks, and "incorporate ecological perspectives," like the Hawaiian fish pond, to "integrate fishing, aquaculture, and conservation."

*Cory Harden
Sierra Club, Moku Loa group*