

Submitted by Rob Parsons to West Hawaii Today on July 26, 20

Dear Editor,

Your article on the EIS approval of the largest ocean fish farm ever in Hawaii (Latest aquaculture venture passes hurdle, July 22, 2009) is cause for concern. Hawaii Oceanic Technology, Inc. has held a bare minimum of public meetings to discuss their enormous project proposal, to raise from 6-12,000 tons of ahi yearly in 12 submerged cages within a 247-acre ocean lease. All of the 12-24,000 tons of fish feed would be imported, containing bait fish (further depleting wild stocks), land-based proteins (e.g. GMO soybeans), and possibly antibiotics, preservatives, growth hormones, and other chemicals. Ninety percent of the ahi produced would be airflown to export markets (primarily Japan), making the venture wholly unsustainable.

DLNR approved the EIS despite their own Office of Conservation and Coastal Lands noting unresolved issues: lack of shark, marine mammal and endangered species plans; inadequate project disclosure and engineering analysis; and environmental concerns. Why should the state agency entrusted with preserving our natural resources be in a rush to approve this giveaway of public waters for private profit? The Board of Land and Natural Resources will conduct a hearing on the Conservation District Use Permit, and let's hope it is well publicized, unlike previous meetings, and held in West Hawaii.

Until the aquaculture industry can adequately address cultural and environmental concerns, sustainability, and profitability, we should proceed forward only with great caution. Such confined animal feeding operations have caused ecological havoc elsewhere, and we don't need that to be part of Hawaii's legacy.

Rob Parsons
Haiku, Maui

Original article available at:

<http://www.westhawaii.com/articles/2009/07/22/local/local05.txt>