

Kevin Renso, Re: Permit Application SHR 023-00003, Taylor Shellfish

August 9<sup>th</sup>, 2023, 1pm

First, I'd like to mention the disappointment I feel that I had to drive all the way down here from Vancouver, British Columbia to be here today. Exhibit 8 alone is full of many inaccuracies, (Confluence's Habitat Management Plan) – which clearly states on page 36 – in regards to the Killer Whale Population, “Effects from the proposed Project to SRKW are expected to be minimal to negligible due to the infrequent use of shallow areas...” ... and later in the paragraph: “While the proposed Project overlaps with depths greater than 20 feet relative to extreme low tide, it is still within a relatively shallow...” What does that statement mean? We have a video from last summer of a family of South Resident Killer Whales in the bay, plus just last week I personally saw what I believe to be a “Common Minke Whale” while I was at the beach, unfortunately without my camera. I will give Taylor the benefit of the doubt that these errors are something you overlooked; but this needs to be examined further at the very least before those bags are dragged to the center of the bay.

I was also looking at the differences between the proposal and what is currently in my province of British Columbia, we aren't talking “apples to apples” here whatsoever, based on size of the structure and its potential environmental impacts:



I have been teaching at a Canadian University for over a decade now, and I feel that you all need a math lesson. Let's say that 50 residents are going to lose an average of \$100,000 of their property value due to this floating garbage (conservative estimates). That's \$5,000,000 that we can use to appeal this, which will get us pretty far when submission would cost \$290; and maybe a couple of thousand getting the necessary papers put together. Plus, that'll buy us 12-18 months to continue this fight, investigate the **stakeholders** closer, and follow the money.

Personally, I'd like to give an example of what you'll lose in the properties surrounding the Bay, when we first bought here, Shelton was a little “sketchy” (6-7 years ago). I have felt that the area's improved, and what's improved it was the property values and taxes captured from that increase – this town has a chance to be a Seattle “summer-home” and vacation/retirement community, this will all but ruin that, I'm sure everyone agrees.

Thanks,

Kevin Renso

(778) 995 6437

kevinrenso@hotmail.com

I'm Nancy Willner (Carkeek) RN MN "Not just NIMBY"

In 2020, we purchased a home on Oakland Bay as a retirement sanctuary for rejuvenation and recreation. The bay is a great place for paddleboarding, windsurfing, kayaking, boating, kite boarding, swimming, fishing, bird watching or watching the light on the bay.

The proposed oyster commercial aquaculture is not in the best interest of the human or animal community for the following reasons:

1. It will act as a dam, decreasing water flow in our shallow, 10-30 ft, dead end estuary.
2. It will result in a net removal of nutrients from the water column. There is potential to disrupt the natural habitat for fish, change the seabed, increase the water temperature and interfere with the movement of sediment.
3. It will alter the microorganisms in the bay with an unknown impact on the 20 plus aquacultures currently in the bay which produce 3.5 million pounds of clams annually.
4. It will be a hazard to navigation. How will this 1800-foot-long floating structure impact our orcas, seals, salmon and migrating water fowl? It will limit where boats can anchor. There are already enough obstacles for boating in the bay.
5. It will be a barrier to the safety of our community as planes will not be able to scoop water as they did 7/4/23 to control a wild fire.
6. Macro and micro plastic from the structure and chemicals used will further pollute the bay. Boats which maintain the structure and oysters will also add to the waste and noise. Light pollution at night will be an issue impacting neighbors on all sides. How will the pull-out spots for harvest impact the shoreline? Has that been addressed?
7. It will disrupt views and decrease property values with diminished income to the county. It's disappointing to think of looking out at 50 acres of floating plastic.

Please deny Taylor Shellfish the lease for this poorly monitored, unproven colossus endeavor. It makes no sense to put such a large commercial structure in such a small low flow estuary. Save the bay for the tax payers of Mason County for our mental and physical wellbeing! There are better options for Oakland Bay which will improve health, provide income and won't have such a devastating impact on the ecosystem. Our Pacific Northwest Resources are unique and limited. Please save Oakland Bay!!

"When the well's dry, we know the worth of water." Ben Franklin

**Luke Viscusi**

---

**From:** Kim Robison <robison.kim@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, August 9, 2023 7:39 PM  
**To:** Luke Viscusi  
**Subject:** Public comment against Permit SHR2023-00003

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Flagged

Caution: External Email Warning! This email has originated from outside of the Mason County Network. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender, are expecting the email, and know the content is safe. If a link sends you to a website where you are asked to validate using your Account and Password, DO NOT DO SO! Instead, report the incident.

The Taylor Shellfish permit will only benefit Taylor Shellfish and not the community. The issue we are facing is the privatization of public waters for the benefit of a private commercial business. Taylor earned \$72M in revenue in 2022, however, the shellfish industry pays few taxes due to rules on export which is over 90% of Taylor's business model. There is no sales tax on shellfish exported out of state or country. There is no export tax. There is no excise tax on shellfish grown from seed by the grower. There is no B&O tax on unprocessed exported shellfish. Property tax on tidelands generates minimum tax revenues. We, the taxpayers are subsidizing the shellfish industry for use of our public waterways.

Taylor's job creation for future years should be considered due to the presentation from Taylor on how efficient this operational model will be. Will they need the numbers of employees they have today or does this model replace the existing workforce?

Finally, the risk being introduced, due to the fact the size of this operation doesn't exist in the United States today, outweighs any reward. This is unprecedented.

We are opposed to this permit.

Kim & Trevor Robison  
Mason County Taxpayers

Sent from my iPad

## Luke Viscusi

---

**From:** Faye Duncan <afduncan654@mail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, August 9, 2023 10:29 PM  
**To:** Luke Viscusi  
**Subject:** Re: RE: Taylor Shellfish Fiasco

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Flagged

**Caution: External Email Warning!** This email has originated from outside of the Mason County Network. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender, are expecting the email, and know the content is safe. If a link sends you to a website where you are asked to validate using your Account and Password, DO NOT DO SO! Instead, report the incident.

Luke,

As an aside, once the subject of whales came up, I wish to expand. I lived in the 2100 block of Highway 3 from 1999 until 2005. I saw orcas at least half a dozen times and a grey whale twice. Perhaps this will jolt your recollection, as it was on the Seattle news. I assume the whale made it back to where it belonged. Another thought came to me regarding wildlife, specifically deer. What's going to happen when a deer gets a hoof or antlers tangled in those bags? They swim too and I have witnessed this on numerous occasions.

Just another thought for the record.

Thank you,

Alice Faye Duncan



[Click to Download](#)

IMG\_7083.MOV

0 bytes

VIRGINIA B DOUGLAS  
1020 EAST SUNSET RD  
SUMNER, WA. 98504

August 10, 2023

Dear Sir,

First, I would like to thank you for your patience in managing the Hearing yesterday. There were a lot of people who are very passionate about the future of Oakland Bay and I appreciate you giving us the chance to tell our stories.

My husband and I are new to the area and very new to dealing with "City Hall". Our intention, when moving to Oakland Bay, was simply to escape our careers and find a peaceful place to retire and make memories with our children and grands.

As we have come to find out, the machinations we are currently dealing with around the installation of a huge commercial enterprise being dropped into the middle of our rural hideaway, has been in the works and under wraps for a long time- certainly well before we purchased our home (I know our realtor checked into a lot of water related issues before we bought the property and this was never brought to her attention). I think the quick SEPA and DNS report timeline suggest the plans had been worked on well in advance. Had we, and a lot of our neighbors, known this was in the works, we would never have purchased the lots and homes we did.

To make matters worse, the notifications that have been made on the part of the county have in no way been adequate. They are incomplete as well. My first understanding of this project is that it was a grow installation- yesterday, I found out it is a processing plant. Is it 2 boats or 3 boats? Will there be 3 employees or 5? Will it be loud, lit like a beacon and stinky- and what will it look like? Who knows? Taylor doesn't. We can't even begin to ask all for all the answers to questions we don't know to ask.

We were thrown into this melee in April with the first scheduled Hearing to have taken place within weeks. The extensions were unexpected and have prolonged the situation and much of that we find is definitely to give Taylor enough time to puff up their application to say whatever is necessary to get this lease.

So with all that in mind I wanted to reach out to you to comment on many of the inconsistencies we observed during yesterday's event. I know your query to Taylor Fish regarding the determination that their proposed industrial aquaculture and production site is in fact the largest ever in the United States, let alone the world, was quite on point. The studies they used couldn't apply to an installation of the proposed size because you can't compare 3,000 bags to 30,000? You can't compare an installation in a small estuary like Oakland Bay to an even smaller installation in a much larger Chesapeake Bay. They can't tell you what the environmental impact will be because they don't have the data to support what they want you to believe and monitoring is not going to change that.

Bells and whistles started to go off in my head when you questioned Taylor about the possibility of integrating different species in the installation should the Pacific Oyster not be as lucrative as they have

planned. When you said the word “geoduck”- my ears really perked up. Taylor can’t possibly tell you what would happen to the already fragile ecosystem in Oakland Bay if they inserted a different kind of oyster, let alone a completely different kind of animal. Is there some regulation the county or someone would put on the installation so Taylor just doesn’t have free reign to do whatever they want once they get their hands on the lease? Believing Taylor won’t change the rules once they get up and running would be very shortsighted.

In fact, neighbors reported dumping going on in Chapman Cove, yesterday. Barges were delivering something no one could identify from their vantage point. Concern was reported by several neighbors to the Planning Office and this was the response...

“Best thing to do if you are seeing dumping is to report it to Ecology using their online [ERTS system](#). That will send a notification to a few different government entities, though I’m not sure which entity would actually investigate the claim. We have very little power to enforce on shellfish growers at the County level, though our Code Enforcement Officer is also on the list notified through ERTS submittals.”

Sincerely,

Luke Viscusi (he/him) | Planner  
Mason County Community Services  
Office # 360-427-9670 ext. 282  
Cell # 360-490-3103  
[LViscusi@MasonCountyWA.gov](mailto:LViscusi@MasonCountyWA.gov)

This response legitimizes our concern that no one will be watching, no one will be monitoring even if required and no monitoring will make the least bit of difference when dealing with a private entity, like Taylor, who is so used to getting what they want.

In my view there were several areas that were not addressed and may be in the Taylor rebuttal. Things should not move forward without answers and more than mere lip service. What are the effects of noise pollution? As we heard, the sound from the generators they discussed appeared to be minimized and certainly not measured by anyone standing on the shoreline. What about the light pollution? What about the odor coming off the installation if they are processing. The oyster bags they have in place now in Chapman Cove emit a very displeasing scent. I can’t imagine what nine acres of lines and bags would smell like.

And, really, we must ask ourselves, why Taylor picked Oakland Bay...a small estuary with very fragile water quality and shellfish we are told not to eat unless cooked, to insert the LARGEST aquaculture site in the US. It’ll be huge and unsightly and offer no benefit to anyone but Taylor. Could it be because Mason County cannot be objective when it comes to Taylor Fish and hidden in a small, out of the way location, where supposedly no one goes, may result in some complaints from uppity neighbors – but that doesn’t matter and won’t- as you read in Luke’s response? There will be no one for us to call for help and no knowledge of what is happening below the surface.

Regarding the number of employees that will be working at the site. Taylor’s loose reassurance of any of the facts doesn’t raise a lot of confidence, but this was interesting. Is it 2-5 employees every day? Or will there be a circus out there during the 2-3 years of installation? We already know, there are Taylor



boats in front of our homes Monday- Sunday, so the prepared information their oyster farm employee read from was not truthful. With regard to work hours... Taylor said they work from 8-5, sometimes 4 hours in the summer and they want to work past dusk in the winter. The young woman who shared her story about entitlement and privilege also offered to show us pictures from working on the boat and in Chapman Cove this summer, photos she had taken from the boat at 5 am!!! 5 am isn't 8-5. Honestly, I didn't move to Oakland Bay to live within throwing distance from a super mall or amazon fulfillment center! I don't think we the people should have to live in the midst of a full on production center disrupting our every waking and non-waking moment. The proposed scope of this simply isn't fair and couldn't reasonably fall within any measure of aesthetics as protected under the Mason County code.

We all know why Taylor is being so evasive in their answers. The truth of the matter is this, they don't know what will happen and they don't want to be tied down to anything specific. In fact and confirmed by Taylor, it will be the largest floating aquaculture and production site in the United States, if not the world. They have no idea how long it will really take to install nor do they know the damage to the floor of the Bay the installation could cause or the impact stirring up all that sediment will create. They show a speed boat careening between their lines in an effort to show us how much fun we can have "re-creating" on the Bay; it's beyond silly but also dangerous. They don't know what will happen to the mammals or fish that will or won't come into the Bay with that huge contraption plugging it all up. And as repeated yesterday, whales do come in the Bay. And they really don't have any idea how the water quality will be impacted.

In addition to all I have said, there still remains a problem with lack of access when you allow for privatization of a public waterway. As I said in my statement, it is really insulting for Taylor Fish Company to suggest we, as neighbors of the Bay, don't use it enough so it's well within their reach to just take it. The mitigation they have offered is offensive and inequitable. It is my understanding that the people of the state have always been allowed to walk on the tidelands along the Puget Sound, so really what are they offering the citizens they don't already have claim to? The fact remains, the only way the public can access these tidelands without a boat is through our private property. That's not generous- that's entitlement!

I will wrap this up with my final concern and that has to do with oversight. As I said in my statement, DNR Aquatics division is, according to them, highly understaffed. If we are going to expect the DNR to provide oversight on the project it's as good as not going to happen. Proposed mitigation being monitoring- it just won't happen and Taylor knows that. The relationship the DNR already has with Taylor supersedes their impartiality and there is an assumption on the part of the DNR that these leases are just status quo...Taylor already has a bunch of them, so what's one more? Without any sort of performance regulation in place, if this project comes to fruition, it will, without fail, bring irreparable damage to this natural treasure.

I'm certain Taylor- and they said this yesterday- you can believe them when they say they will provide oversight on their own project... they will check for garbage, and all the rest, every two weeks. Believe me, they will say whatever they need to in order to convince you and the DNR this lease is just like all the others. It's not...and the reason I know that is because they don't have any proof...they don't even know what it will look like!

What I do know is there is another lease under consideration with the DNR called The Coalition Oakland Bay Community Project lease. This lease is for the same footprint of the Taylor lease. However they are

very different. The scope of the Taylor lease is to enrich Taylor and benefit a handful of their stake holders...like the Oakland Bay Marina, the Squaxin Island Tribe, the small business owners who are solely dependent on Taylor for oyster seed, Taylor employees and the Taylor family. I was surprised not to have heard from the Squaxin Tribe yesterday but I did see Rana Brown from the Tribe was watching online. The Tribe has been assured the installation will be moved for them to fish, yet it is impossible to consider the reality of that happening. On one hand Taylor says they will move the installation to Chapman Cove creating whatever damage that will create. Please have Taylor describe what that process will look like; my guess is they don't know. Will it take more than 2-5 employees? If it takes years to install are they just going to unhook it and drag it across the waterway in a day...and what if that's the day I want to canoe with my grandchild? Will Taylor get precedence then too?

The Coalition Oakland Bay Community Project lease benefits the community; the community you met yesterday in addition to all members of the public. This lease is very important to our community and to the general public. It is consistent with many of the goals identified in the DNR mission, most especially because it encourages public use and access and ensures environmental protection unlike industrial aquaculture leases that financially benefit one corporation at the expense of marine life and public use.

Again, with full transparency, of course, I want to protect the value of my personal property we have worked our whole lives to acquire- but the further down I dig, the more I find, is so troubling. Taylor Shellfish Company is disingenuous at best. In my opinion, the truth evades them in that the inconsistencies from just yesterday create a lot of doubt. Truth be told, they don't know the answers, and the people around the Bay don't want to be guinea pigs and the ones left holding the literal bag for generations to come.

It is time to say no to this lease!

Again, I thank you so much for your time, patience and consideration.

Respectfully,

Ginny Douglas  
1020 East Sunset Rd  
Shelton, WA. 98504  
253-208-8683

## **Taylor Shellfish permit (SHR2023-00003) Public Comment**

To refute the testimony of the Taylor Shellfish biologist witness, below is a photo of The endangered Southern Resident Killer Whales that visit Oakland Bay annually. This image is taken, from our cell phone, from the shore of 2370 E State Route 3 on July 21,2022 facing toward Chapman Cove.

The Southern Resident Killer Whales species is classified by NOAA as an endangered species and therefore rules have been defined to protect against the extinction. Once such rule is defined as a new emerging threat. The floating oyster bag is a new emerging threat due to the sheer size, but as important due to the noise from generators and boats that will interfere with the ability of endangered species to eat, rest, and reproduce.

In fact, in March 2018, Governor Inslee issued an executive order requiring state agencies to take immediate action to protect the remaining orcas and established the South Resident Orca Task Force.

With the utmost respect we ask the examiner to hear witness testimony, prior to rendering any decision, from experts with:

WA State Orca Recovery  
Southern Resident Orca Recovery  
NOAA  
Sierra Club

Respectfully,

Kim & Trevor Robison

Taylor Shellfish permit (SHR2023-00003) Public Comment



## Taylor Shellfish permit (SHR2023-00003) Public Comment

We are respectfully asking the examiner to to gather more data and conduct additional analysis prior to rendering a decision due to the project risk setting precedence within United States public waterways and the liability of unknown risks or mitigation plan.

The additional data we are asking to be shared with the public is:

1. The generator noise specification in decibals.  
How the generator noise will comply with the noise ordinance policy updated by the county in March 2022, Chapter 9.36 – Noise Control.  
Impact study of the vibrations emitted from the generators on species in the bay.
2. Considering the primary cause of light pollution is outdoor lights that emit light upwards, we are requesting the lighting specifications. There are numerous scientific studies on the effects of light pollution from agencies and subject matter experts, such as the Executive Secretary of the Covention for Migratory Species, “light pollution can stall the recovery of threatened species and interfere with their ability to undertake long-distance migrations, reduce breeding success and their chance of survival”.
3. Employment projections 3, 5, 7, 10 years post implementation of the floating oyster bag system due to the presentation points emphasized by Taylor Shellfish of the operational efficiency future state that comes with this project. The question not answered is: will the current state manual methods become obsolete and jobs eliminated?

Respectfully,

Kim & Trevor Robison

**Luke Viscusi**

---

**From:** Deborah Barnett <deborahbarnett1@icloud.com>  
**Sent:** Saturday, August 12, 2023 9:00 AM  
**To:** Luke Viscusi  
**Subject:** Fwd: Taylor aqua-culture floating system Oakland bay

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Flagged

**Caution: External Email Warning!** This email has originated from outside of the Mason County Network. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender, are expecting the email, and know the content is safe. If a link sends you to a website where you are asked to validate using your Account and Password, DO NOT DO SO! Instead, report the incident.

Good morning Luke. I would like to add this email as part of the testimony regarding Taylor Shellfish . Thank you, Debby Barnett

PS, I will be attending in person on August 16 and have a written statement that I will turn in as well as speak at the meeting.

Sent from my iPad

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** Joe Schmit <Joe.Schmit@sheltonwa.gov>  
**Date:** July 12, 2023 at 9:04:21 AM PDT  
**To:** Deborah Barnett <deborahbarnett1@icloud.com>  
**Cc:** Eric Onisko <Eric.Onisko@sheltonwa.gov>, Mark Ziegler <mark.ziegler@sheltonwa.gov>  
**Subject: Re: Taylor aqua-culture floating system Oakland bay**

Thank you for reaching out. I recommend this be shared with Mason County Board of Commissioners.

The City of Shelton does not have any legal authority over the permitting of this project as this project is well outside of the City limits and jurisdiction.

Let me know if you have any further questions.

> On Jul 12, 2023, at 08:34, Deborah Barnett <deborahbarnett1@icloud.com> wrote:

>

> [EXTERNAL] This email originated from outside the City of Shelton. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

>

>

> Good morning Mr. Schmit, my name is Debby Barnett and my husband and I have a home on Oakland bay. We built this home 32 years ago and have enjoyed living on the bay raising our 2 boys.

> We are extremely disappointed that Taylor Shellfish proposes to build a 50 acre floating oyster farm. This development will significantly lower our homes value, which will reduce the property taxes . In addition to the lower taxes, the recreation of fishing, boating, swimming, kayaking , water skiing on Oakland bay will also be negatively impacted. Residents are concerned there will be a loss of a quiet environment due to a significant number of workers, boats, and lights maintaining these floating oyster cultures during the day or night.

>  
> Last weeks McEwan wild fire burned approximately 244 acres of industrial timber and private land ,triggered evacuations and threatened hundreds of homes. Oakland bay was the major source for the airplanes to load up water to contain and assist with fighting the fire. If this floating aqua system was already built ,access to the water for fighting the fire would have been nearly impossible. Resulting in increased loss of homes, timber and businesses and possibly the loss of life.  
> Over the past 32 years we have seen Oakland bay go from a highly polluted body of water to a clean bay that attracts Seals, Orca whales , fish habitat, and other types of sea life. The seals, have their young in this bay where they are protected.  
> We are lifelong Washington state residents and love the Puget Sound.  
> PLEASE DON'T LET TAYLOR BUILD THIS FLOATING STRUCTURE AND DESTROY ALL THE POSITIVE PROGRESS THAT HAS BEEN MADE IN OAKLAND BAY.  
>  
> THANK YOU,  
> sincerely yours,  
> Devitt and Deborah Barnett and the Friends of Oakland Bay  
>  
> Sent from my iPad



**Joe Schmit**  
Deputy Mayor

**M** (360) 968-3020  
**E** [Joe.Schmit@sheltonwa.gov](mailto:Joe.Schmit@sheltonwa.gov)

525 West Cota St.  
Shelton Washington 98584

The City of Shelton is subject to the Washington Public Records Act, Chapter 42.56 RCW.  
This message and any attachments may constitute records subject to public disclosure pursuant to the Act.

**Luke Viscusi**

---

**From:** Richard and Judy B. <930squirre SEND@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Sunday, August 13, 2023 12:50 PM  
**To:** Luke Viscusi  
**Subject:** Taylor Shellfish Proposal for Oakland Bay

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Flagged

**Caution: External Email Warning!** This email has originated from outside of the Mason County Network. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender, are expecting the email, and know the content is safe. If a link sends you to a website where you are asked to validate using your Account and Password, DO NOT DO SO! Instead, report the incident.

It doesn't take a scientist to realize that an installation that large in a body of water this small will have a huge negative impact on the environment and wildlife. Public waters should not be used so exclusively for private profit. If approved, heaven forfend, without oversight, it is certain to be an environmental disaster.

Respectfully,  
Judith Brumley-Bidwell



Taylor Shellfish Oakland Bay Proposal SHR2023-00003

Dear Sir,

1. Has thought been given to the **shoreline damage** at Bay Shore or wherever they plan to work from for this project during installation, maintenance and harvest? I found that in Mason Country I needed to get permits for a bulkhead which would cost \$10-20,000, make it through 3 permitting agencies, a geoengineer then if approved and my house didn't lose insurance, I could pay \$100,000 for some rocks along our beach. Does Taylor need to mitigate their shoreline damage? It was too pricy for us!
2. When the wind came up yesterday while paddling, I realized the proposed structure will divert water toward the shores and cause increased **erosion**. Besides the **noise** from the generator, the workers, and the boats there will be noise from the waves pounding the floating aquaculture.
3. When I multiplied the **size** of the containers with the distance between rows it appears to reach shore to shore. We will have trouble **accessing** the bay.
4. **Debris** from the aquaculture is a concern. I found an unmarked container like what was shown at the hearing last week along with large amount of plastic and a sweatshirt while paddling near Chapman Cove yesterday.
5. Saturday, I saw a shellfish boat heading down the bay. I have no way knowing if it was Taylor's. Taylor said they don't work on the **weekends**.
6. Taylor said they are moving the oysters/gear to Chapman Cove for **Native fishing**. That cove is dry during low tide and has clam beds. They will be moving gear over what we call Nursery Point where the seal pups hang out in the summer. Chapman cove is covered under the Bush Act and mostly owned by Taylor I understand. They appear to do what they want in there with no oversight.
7. The eelgrass study was from 2019. I had to get a new septic inspection even though I had 2 good ones in 3 years when applying for a building permit because it was outside of 12 months since the last one.
8. I learned at the hearing that the project will be growing and **production**. What does that mean? Will they have oyster seed and grow large oysters.
9. What would **oversite** look like on the project? It appears they are already pushing the boundaries for best management. Also, if the water changes and oysters can't survive what will happen to the structure?

Industry is often given more leeway in the environmental issues than you or I. I hope that doesn't mean they can destroy the ecosystem of Oakland Bay. Taylor been less than transparent in their proposal. None of the Taylor team would look me in the eye at the hearing except the woman they exploited. Were they hoping that since we are a poor community with a less than average HS graduation rate no one would object? I hope you are able to deny this permit for 30,000 oysters, bigger than any aquaculture in the state. Thanks for listening.

**Luke Viscusi**

---

**From:** stuart horn <s\_e.horn@sbcglobal.net>  
**Sent:** Sunday, August 13, 2023 8:52 AM  
**To:** Luke Viscusi  
**Subject:** Taylor shellfish comments

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Flagged

**Caution: External Email Warning!** This email has originated from outside of the Mason County Network. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender, are expecting the email, and know the content is safe. If a link sends you to a website where you are asked to validate using your Account and Password, DO NOT DO SO! Instead, report the incident.

Hi Luke.  
I submitted these thoughts to you earlier.  
I would like for them to be included in the meeting if possible.  
If not it's ok but I would like my opinion to be shared.  
I would attend the meeting myself but I will be having a surgery.  
Thank you.  
Stuart Horn

PLEASE!!  
Do not allow Taylor to place their farm on the bay.  
They already do enough farming there.  
I feel so sorry for anyone living on that beautiful body of water.  
If this goes through they'll have the displeasure of having to look at Taylor's mess instead of the pristine open water.  
I can't believe it would even be allowed, from a wildlife protection perspective. Orcas frequent Oakland Bay. Aren't they protected? Don't the unfortunate souls who live on the water own tidal rights? I can't believe that a "company" would be allowed to place a business anywhere near residential housing.  
It is a very bad idea to mess with a beautiful body of water in the interest of creating a few new jobs. This is exactly the kind of thing that communities allow and then regret...forever.  
Please don't allow this!!

August 14, 2023

[mfrazier@masoncountywa.gov](mailto:mfrazier@masoncountywa.gov)

Public Comment on #SEP2023-00007

Taylor Shellfish floating oyster farm in Oakland Bay

Comment from:

Joseph M. Holt, property owner, 1984 & 2010 E Highway 3, Shelton, WA 98584

Mason County parcel number 32016-51-00053, 206-794-0063, [hooch8599@yahoo.com](mailto:hooch8599@yahoo.com)

- I respectfully submit my public comment. I am adamantly opposed to the installation of a floating oyster farm in Oakland Bay. I am a property owner on Oakland Bay and this project deeply concerns me for the following reasons:
- The scope of the project is very large in relationship to Oakland Bay. The effects on the ecosystem are not yet known. As per the public comments last week, there are no set requirements for monitoring or community disclosure.
- The project would not only obscure surface water, it would add lights, industrial watercraft, generators and noise to our pristine bay.
- The fact that there were log booms in this area previously is irrelevant, two wrongs do not make a right.
- The proposed property is owned by the Department of Natural Resources which is a public entity. Taylor Shellfish is a private entity. This project is converting a public property to a private industrial operation.
- Taylor Shellfish is a very successful private business. They will be able to continue their business with or without this project.
- The only parties in favor of this project are Taylor Shellfish, other member of the shellfish industry, employees of Taylor Shellfish and another big industrial, Sierra Pacific. They are not residents of Oakland Bay. All residents of Oakland Bay and private parties are opposed to the project.
- This use is incompatible with Oakland Bay. This is a residential community that will be negatively impacted by the addition of this industrial oyster farm.
- My family has owned this property since 1947. We have been very good stewards of the bay. We are hard-working people, not people of "privilege".
- This project does not significantly add employment to Mason County.
- The project will be at least 1000' away from public beaches. The distance from private beaches has not been disclosed.
- I am concerned about the effects on the bay's wildlife including whales.
- The bay needs to be accessible for fire mitigation which was recently needed.

Please consider the rights of the hardworking, taxpaying residents of Oakland Bay in your decision. We love our bay as it is. Oakland Bay is the heart of Shelton and we love it. Please preserve it.

Respectfully,  
Joseph M. Holt

## Luke Viscusi

---

**From:** james-nancy hancharik <nancyhank@msn.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, August 14, 2023 3:20 PM  
**To:** Luke Viscusi  
**Subject:** Taylor Shellfish Substantial Development SHR 2023-00003

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Flagged

**Caution: External Email Warning!** This email has originated from outside of the Mason County Network. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender, are expecting the email, and know the content is safe. If a link sends you to a website where you are asked to validate using your Account and Password, DO NOT DO SO! Instead, report the incident.

To the hearings examiner,

We are definitely apposed to the Taylor Shellfish development in Oakland Bay. It will take this beautiful pristine water & scenery and turn it into a scene from a horror movie looking like the back of a dragon or dinosaur complete with 30,000 bumps, projections, with lines and ropes in a 9.1 acres of 50 acres. It is just not right that one company has the right to destroy something that has been this calming and peaceful and turn it into an industrial area.

As I listened to the hearing last week, I became aware of the fact that there would be 24 hour lights on the floating bags and the running of generators to power the floating bags and the lights. When are we to ever hear the birds tweeting again? Have you ever listened to the noise that a single generator makes let alone the number required for this enormous floating disaster? The noise never stops, it just goes on and on. The Taylors will be content at home without the constant noise of generators that echo across the water. This is not acceptable and this project should be stopped before it is begun.

As I watched nightly the Perseid Meteor Shower from Thursday night to early Monday morning, I was amazed at how beautiful and bright the stars were in the sky. This was a priceless experience. Then I wondered what would it be like with all the lights reflecting into the night sky destroying the darkness. The National Parks in the US have established dark sky nights so that campers can enjoy the stars at night. So why should one company be able to take this away from anyone in the area that wants to look up at the night sky. They take away our priceless night star view and they get millions of dollars for the night sky that we will never get to see again.

How is one company allowed such power to potentially destroy the beauty in Mason County? It doesn't make sense to so many people. How is it that Mason County Planning Department even wants to allow this when the majority of the oysters will be exported and no tax dollars revenue will be received to the county or state. (Taylor United needs to provide this data in writing so that all of Mason County

residents will be aware of the loss of tax base.) This is not a tourist attraction, it will be an eyesore that people will probably be asking as they drive along highway 3, "what is that thing out there?" "Who in their right mind would have allowed such a thing to be put there?"

Lets keep Mason County famous for the beautiful lakes, streams, bays & rivers and not famous for an ugly eyesore experiment that could go so wrong.

I am including an excerpt from the page of the National Park System regarding the night sky versus light pollution.

["NPS.gov"](http://NPS.gov)

### Why Protect the Night Sky?

For thousands of years humans have found inspiration for art, literature, mythology, and science from gazing upon the stars above. The constellations have led explorers to new horizons and served as calendars for ancient cultures. Yet today, humanity has become disconnected from our cultural heritage of observing the night sky.

Humans are not alone with their connection to the night sky. Many wildlife species and certain plants also rely on dark night skies, void of artificial light, for their survival. **Light pollution** can affect the growth and flowering of plants and therefore the insects that depend on those plants for food. Nocturnal animal species are especially vulnerable to effects of light pollution. Frogs and toads may not sing if ambient light is too bright, affecting mating. Birds that migrate at night can be thrown off course by artificial light."

If you put this to a vote to the people of Mason County what would the result be? Probably a big NO.

No to Taylor United Shellfish Oyster Bag Farm in Oakland Bay.

Thank you

Nancy & James Hancharik  
250 E Suncrest Ln  
Shelton, WA 98584

Sent from [Mail](#) for Windows











To The **Hearing Examiner:**

In my comments during the Hearing on August 9th, I mentioned that my wife & I have owned a home on Sunset Road directly across Oakland Bay from Highway 3 and the proposed 50 Acre Oyster Farm. We share many of the comments expressed by residents along Oakland Bay in opposition to the proposed Lease to Taylor Shellfish Inc.. Rather than repeat comments made by others in attendance at the Hearing, I mentioned two observations that I wanted to be noted during the Hearing.

**Observation No. 1** Oakland Bay has seen the return of Orca Whales during 2022 & 2023. Further investigation should be conducted to determine whether this is due to abundant food supply or perhaps the absence of commercial and boating activities. This should have a direct impact on any determination as to whether a 50 acre oyster farm will have an adverse impact on Orca Whales coming into Oakland Bay and Hammersley Inlet.

**Observation No. 2** My second comment related to the water temperature in Oakland Bay as compared to the average temperatures throughout South Puget Sound. On average, water temperatures in Oakland Bay are 4 to 7 degrees warmer than water temperatures at the southern tip of Squaxin and Harstine Island. Our concern is that this is an indication that the water in Oakland Bay has a tendency to move back and forth rather than circulate into larger bodies of water in South Puget Sound. This would be an indication of the fragile nature of the Ecosystem in Oakland Bay, where relatively minor changes in Oakland Bay could have a more pronounced & dramatic impact on the Ecosystem. The above observations will require a more Careful approach to any consideration of commercial activities in Oakland Bay and require that a decision regarding a Lease to Taylor Shellfish be subject to a slower review of all aspects of their request, and perhaps a smaller “footprint” area for the requested Lease of surface area in Oakland Bay.

Thank you for taking our comments into consideration regarding the important impact that a Lease to Taylor Shellfish would have on our Community.

Sincerely yours,

Devitt & Deborah Barnett, E. 844 Sunset Road, Shelton, WA

Tuesday, August 15, 2023

To: Luke Viscusi, Mason County Community Development Planner

Dear Mr. Viscusi,

Please forward these comments to the hearings examiner.

The presentation by Taylor Shellfish for the proposed floating shellfish farm left far too many questions unanswered and glossed over too many facts.

SEPA Page 10 of 15. K. **“Has the site been classified as a critical area by the city or County? If so, specify. Aquatic and Wildlife Conservation area.”**

This brings up the phenomena of a “tipping points” in reference to critical thresholds beyond which a particular environmental system or process is irreversibly altered, often leading to far-reaching and potentially disastrous consequences.

The project is located between two salmon and estuary habitat restoration projects and no one has explained how this massive project will affect them. While the adult salmonids are mentioned in the SEPA form, the only reference to migration routes the report makes is an assumption that the project will not affect salmon spawning or migration in any way. Also, SEPA Section 11. Light and Glare states **no** impact, but how will the light pollution from the night warning lights effect aquatic life? Using lights to attract fish at night has been a well-known fishing method since ancient times. Ancient cultures used fire to attract fish to their boats to catch them more easily. Articles have been written on how “Artificial nighttime lighting has been shown to affect the behavior of various aquatic organisms, including many salmonids. Light-mediated behaviors may include changes in foraging, predator avoidance, reproduction, and migration”.<sup>1,2</sup>

What affect will the project have on the algae already growing in the bay? Will there be competition for nutrients from the water because the oysters are using these nutrients? The marine algae that grow in the region was identified as *Ulva*, which, also, filters nitrogen. Because it is common it isn't considered important, but it is a food source for aquatic life. It will have to compete with the huge scale and the sheer number of oyster seed and oysters. This would suggest that there will be heavy competition. Aquatic creatures will have difficulty feeding on the oysters because they are protected in cages but what will happen if the marine algae, their natural forage, is reduced. What are the consequences?

Salmon predators are very adept at using manmade restrictions to salmon runs such as dams and river mouths as an easy way to catch fish. This project will potentially channel salmon returning to spawn into channels with unknown effect on how they will evade anything pursuing them as they are used to having open waters with no restrictions. I have seen sea lions and herons waiting by fish ladders to pick off the fish through the narrow channels. Herons and other fishing birds will be given nice new perches atop the cages to do so.

The existing ecosystem that has evolved over millennium of years. It is not possible to place oysters on the scale proposed, in places where they have never been and will never be in nature and not expect to have some consequences. There is simply no data either way for this scenario, but historically such introductions have not ended well. Oysters and other shellfish may be very benign and useful organisms for cleaning up polluted water but the Shellfish industry has a very checkered past in protecting their investments at the cost of the local environment and citizens. As a 2017 article written in the Seattle Times about the public protests in Willapa Bay about the past use of herbicides and pesticides used to improve shellfish beds but caused harmful effects to native species and people.<sup>4</sup> For over 50 years the shellfish industry used chemicals that had specific warnings on their labels that they should not be used in water or sprayed on people. With a 3.5-million-dollar investment comes a proclivity to protect that investment. The use of public waters may have many repercussions that are unexpected, such as have been seen in the impacts shoreline shellfish management has had on fishing industry and endangered salmonids, due to the loss of native and non-native eelgrass beds. Taylors stated they will not use any pesticides or herbicides and there are no eelgrass beds to protect, but what happened in the past, despite opposition by the public, they were allowed to protect their investment for over 50 years at a cost to others.

SEPA Section “7. Environmental health” unfortunately does not seem to cover existing aquatic environmental problems. Oakland Bay was a source of Vibrio poisoning at Taylor Shellfish restaurants and is marked on a map as a source of contamination.<sup>5</sup>

What environmental harm are the anchors drilling going to cause? What is involved in the hydraulic drilling process? Will it bring up toxins as this was a former logging site, upset the algae, cause turbulence that will kill aquatic life? What sort of noise will it create?

SEPA Page 10 of 15. I. “What is the current comprehensive plan designation for the site? Rural residential 5 acres”. - **It is not designated industrial.**

Why should Mason County waters be the site of a huge experimental project with no proven record of no environmental harm? Scaling a projects size by 10 is not even close to the size of the original referenced farm and what was the environment of that site? There are consequences such as a tipping point and we do not know what the turning point is for this project before it becomes harmful to the environment.

Will the oyster seed be sold first to local shellfish farmers as a prioritization?

What about the impact to tourists, and other visitors to Bayshore park? I am not sure that a floating shellfish farm is the experience tourists would hope for in viewing salmon migration.

Why would 16 acre of mud flats adjacent to Highway 3 be in anyway a compensatory recreation site to 50 acres of open water.

Once these questions are addressed and a more in-depth review of the project is provided perhaps a considered opinion can be reached. At this point there is just not enough information to

the number of oysters that can be grown with no net environmental harm. Scaling a project up 10 times means it is essentially an unknown entity with a huge opportunity to do harm where restoration work is being done.

Most importantly this is public land. The public has largely voiced their opinions against this project.

Thank you for your consideration,  
Francesca Ritson

<sup>1</sup><https://www.govlink.org/watersheds/8/committees/15TechFrm/Artificial-Lighting-Experiments-RTabor-USFWS-2015.pdf> Artificial Lighting Experiments in Lake Washington (2014) and Lake Sammamish (2015)

Roger Tabor and Alex Bell, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Daniel Lantz, Chris Gregersen, and Hans Berge, King County

“Artificial nighttime lighting has been shown to affect the behavior of various aquatic organisms, including many salmonids. Light-mediated behaviors may include changes in foraging, predator avoidance, reproduction, and migration. Often fish are attracted to artificial nighttime lighting (positive phototaxis) and their behavior may more resemble daytime behavior than nighttime behavior. In urban areas, high intensity artificial lights are common features near freshwater ecosystems. This lighting can come directly from streetlights, industrial and residential buildings, bridges, and other urban structures. In shallow waters, high intensity artificial lighting at close proximity may penetrate through the entire water column. Thus, fish species that utilize shallow water in urban areas may be highly susceptible to the effects of artificial night lighting.”

<sup>2</sup><https://nativefishsociety.org/news-media/juvenile-salmon-attraction-to-light-at-night>

<sup>3</sup><https://ecology.wa.gov/Regulations-Permits/Permits-certifications/Aquatic-pesticide-permits/Burrowing-shrimp-control-Imidacloprid>

<https://www.beyondpesticides.org/assets/media/documents/WillapaBay.pdf>

<sup>4</sup><https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/environment/shellfish-spraying-in-willapa-bay-continues-on-clam-beds/>

<sup>5</sup><https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/health/tighter-rules-aim-to-limit-seafood-poisoning-from-raw-oysters/>

Mark Herinckx  
860 E Sunset Rd  
Shelton, WA 98584  
August 15th, 2023

Luke Viscusi, Planner and Mason County Hearing Examiner  
Mason County Community Development, Taylor Shellfish Proposal  
615 W. Alder St.  
Shelton, WA 98584  
Sent Via Email to [LViscusi@MasonCountyWA.gov](mailto:LViscusi@MasonCountyWA.gov)

To the Examiner:

I would like to submit some additional comments regarding the two main areas where this proposal falls well short of meeting the SMP and MCC in the areas of aesthetics and public access. (17.50.140, 17.50070, 17.50.020 and RWC90.58.020 #5)

Taylor makes various assertions in their submitted Exhibit 11 that are simply not true. Starting on page 5 they go through items in MCC 17.50.210(b). For item (E) they assert that “The proposal will not create any significant adverse impacts to normal use of the surface waters...”. This is clearly not true. It will in fact block the primary usable area of Oakland Bay and prevent the enjoyment and access to the public at large. This is further documented by Exhibit 30 presented by Luke Viscusi, which shows in better detail the impact of this proposal, particularly at low tide, which happens twice per day. It shows in graphic photo detail the massive footprint in the bay and the proportion of the bay it occupies at low tide. It also shows how close this actually is to the surrounding homes and how the size dwarfs the surrounding waterfront communities. The added imposition of a 6 MPH speed limit, in addition to the current 6 MPH in the orange zone, reveals additional reduction of access to the public. This time of year, in the warmer weather, it is not uncommon to see water skiers and wakeboarders in the bay on a daily basis. Because of the low flow exchange rate of Oakland Bay, the water warms up in the summer, making it pleasant for recreational use. This is rare in the Puget Sound. There are some vacation rentals in the area that bring tourist dollars to Mason County, which use this area frequently. At low tide Chapman cove and the northern area of the bay are dry, so this project occupies a huge portion of the deeper usable water. It is also important to note that Taylor already owns and farms an extensive portion of this bay. This is a disproportionate and unnecessary addition to their portfolio to increase profits at the expense of the public access.

In Exhibit 11, page 8, item (K) Taylor asserts that “The proposal will minimize interference with navigation.” Again, Exhibit 30 shows that the deeper center area of Oakland Bay will, in fact, be blocked to any practical navigation and will be controlled by Taylor, Inc. The assertion that boats will be able to navigate between the rows of floating gear is a really lame and pathetic attempt to rationalize the

takeover of public space by a private company. The ability to move between 2000-ft long floating lines in one direction does not in any way mitigate the inability to sail and recreate at will, by the public, in this space. And, besides, it makes this space virtually unusable to anyone, except Taylor. This notion that the company propagates about the 9.1-acres of floating gear is a total minimization of the real 50-acre footprint that will be rendered unusable. This is like saying that a berry farm only occupies the area that is planted, and not the dirt in between that is needed to pick and grow the berries. That is why farmers purchase more land than what is used solely by the plants, right?

On page 13 of Exhibit 11, item 2., Taylor asserts "The Proposal will not interfere with the normal public use of the shoreline. The site occupies a minor portion of Oakland Bay and is located outside of navigational channels." We the public are put in a position to have to respond to this nonsense that Taylor Inc. is trying to make us believe. I am a boater. To navigate you need water. This is the deepest, water in Oakland Bay. If you want to use the bay in anything but a kayak, you need this area, particularly at low tide to navigate, or you will find yourself stuck in the mud. And, this space is frequently used. This bay has a 14 plus foot difference between high and low tide, that is why so much of it dries out at low tide. If you want to navigate or anchor a boat, you must account for this daily change.

And, by the way this 14 plus foot swing adds to the angle of impact by this proposal on the surrounding homes by increasing the angle of view from the properties and the resultant percentage of the view being occupied by 2000-foot-long lines (Exhibit 24). Exhibit 11, item (J) page 8. Taylor tries to argue that "the Proposal will not substantially detract from the aesthetic qualities of the surrounding area." Really? It appears to me that, to date, there has been much passionate testimony to the contrary, by nearly everyone that opposes this project. People around this bay, and the public, love this place and the beautiful natural views. Again, look at Exhibit 30, and you will see that the extent of this mess will be in front of the entire row of houses along E. Sunset Rd. This is some of the finest real estate in the County and owners are heavily invested in their properties and views. Some of the homes will have their entire view dominated by this installation.

Taylor's assertion in Exhibit 23, item V., page 4 that "...additional public access will more than offset any minor impacts...", is totally false. First of all, the impacts will be 50-acres-massive in the center of the bay and any "offsetting measures" cannot and will not compensate this arrogant takeover of this prime space. The offer of low tide access to parcels already owned by Taylor and, at no cost to Taylor, is virtually useless. These areas are already accessible to the public twice per day at high tide. The low tide area is mud, which has value to Taylor, but no one else. Improvements to the public boat ramp are totally nonspecific in terms of design and dollars to be invested, and even if they were, are still meaningless in light of what Taylor would like to control. Perhaps some Exhibits could be put together by the county to show all of the property that Taylor currently controls in Oakland Bay and the percentage of the bay that is now being used for industrial applications by various companies, to put the balanced usage of the bay in perspective. Property owners have heavily invested close to the areas of the bay that remain natural and in balance with current aquaculture installations. And, as testimony has shown, the area around this proposal is residential, not industrial. This is an industrial growing operation. It is a massive, precedent-setting project that will throw the entire bay out

of balance, without any regard to the public and property owners that have made this place home. The 16.6 acres of proposed formal public access will only happen twice per day, so reduce that to 8.3. The takeover is 50-acres. This does not increase access and does not comply with the SMP.

Taylor has put a lot of spin on their unnecessary expansion in this wonderful place, and why not, there are tons of money to be made. Exhibit 30 really shows how out of place and noncompliant this project is. Any honest person will realize that this will completely change the character of the bay. Taylor has been at this game for a long time and they know that the deck is stacked in their favor. With speed and minimal public notice, they are attempting to push this through with heavily skewed information. They have deep pockets and the public is put in a position to organize, get up to speed and respond the best we can. And we are continuing to do just that. But, more importantly, it is not possible to comply with the public access requirements for this project because it is simply too big. It wouldn't matter if they offered 100-acres of mud. It still would not offset the "taking" of prime public space that should be available for use and enjoyment by all, including Taylor Inc. employees, on their day off.

For these reasons, I request that this noncompliant proposal be denied.

Thank you for the professionalism you have thus far demonstrated in this hearing,

Mark Herinckx





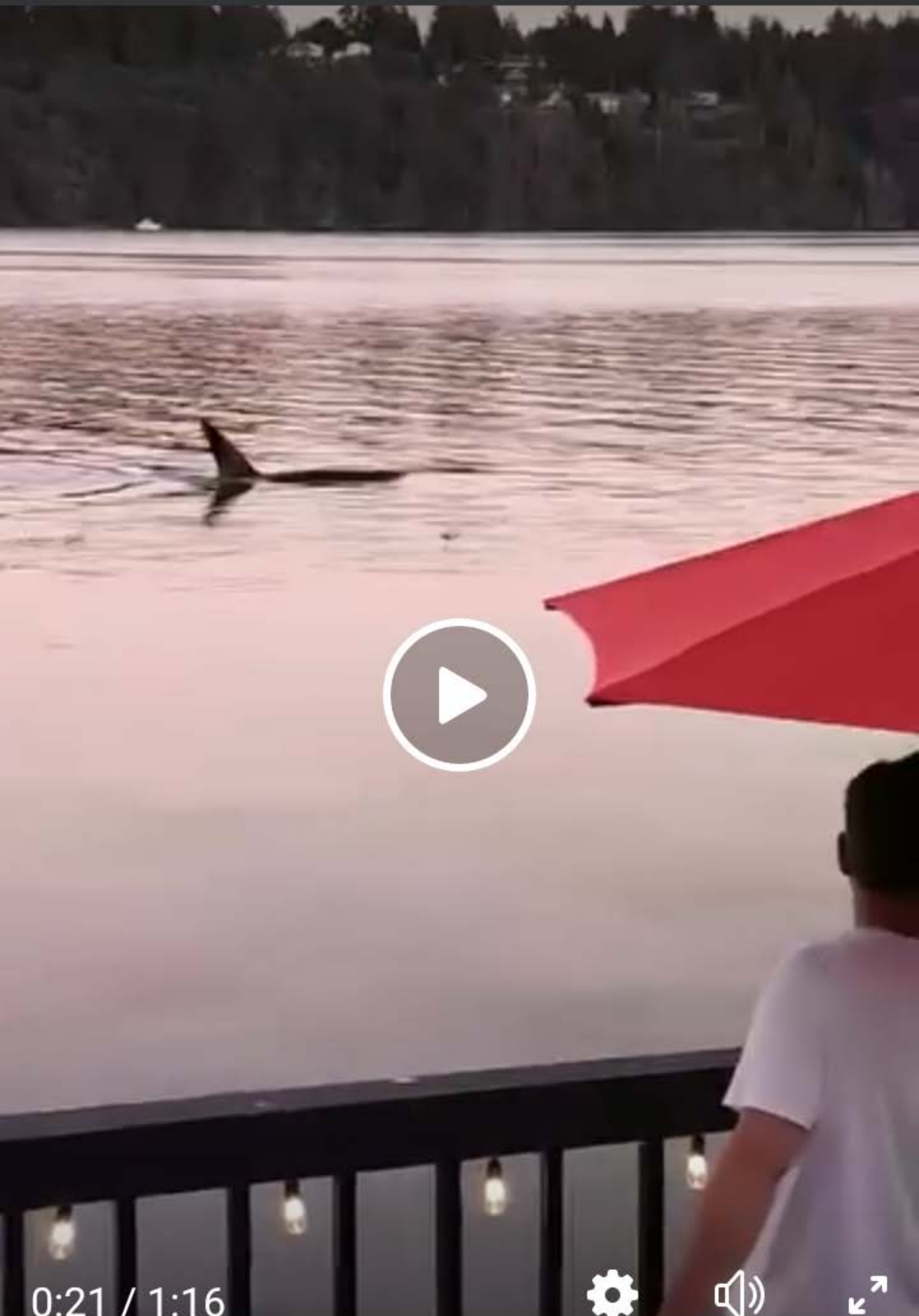
59%



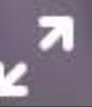
1:47 PM



# More Videos



0:21 / 1:16





59%



1:47 PM



# More Videos

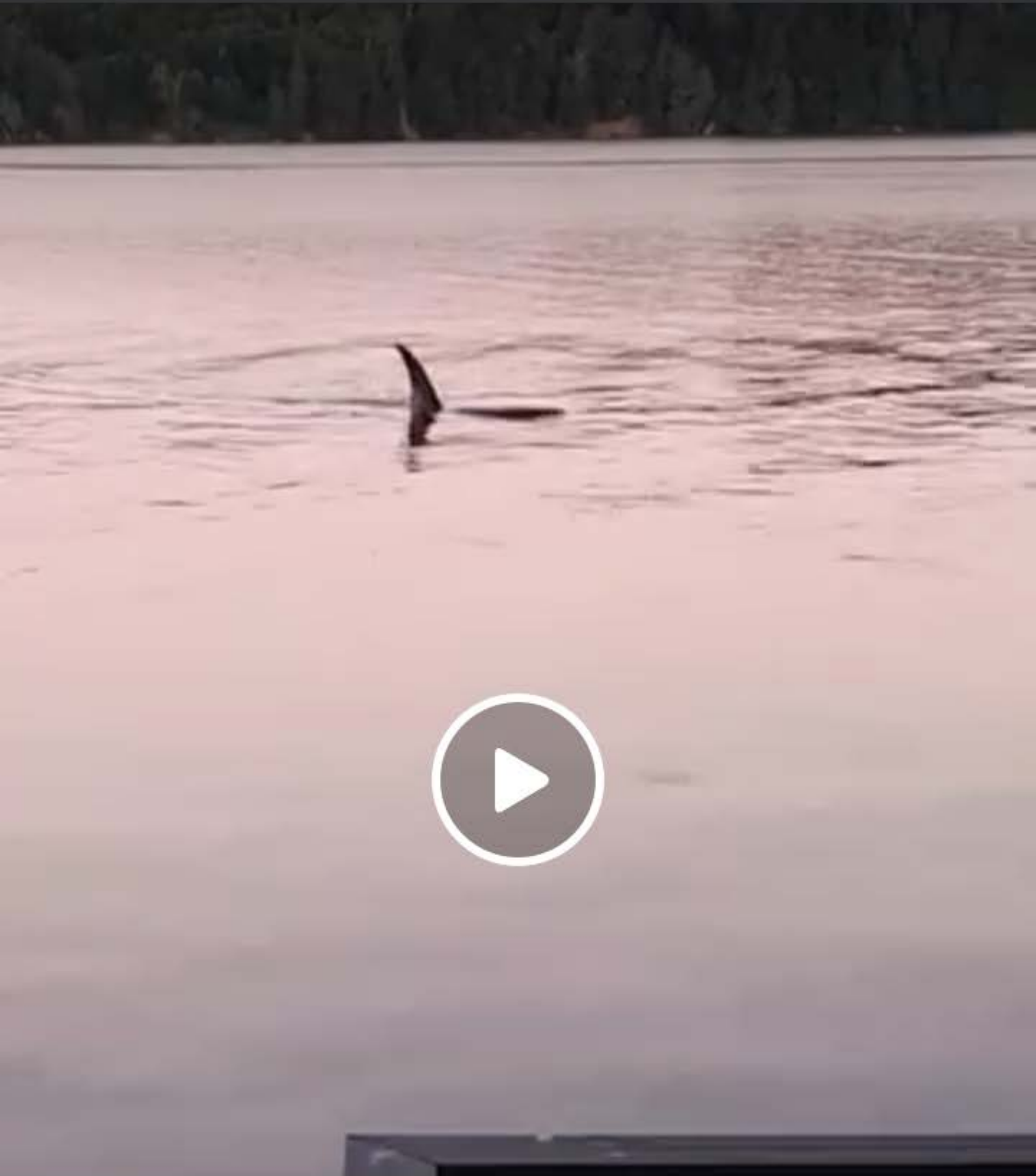


**Danilo Fulgencio**

Jul 29, 2022 ·



Having drinks and relaxing on the deck with are neighbors and are sp... See more





58%



1:48 PM



# More Videos



20

13 comments • 3 shares • 247 views





4G LTE



57%



1:48 PM



# More Videos



   20

13 comments • 3 shares • 247 views

