



GREAT LAKES FISH FARMING

Water is our most valuable natural resource and as the Great Lakes State, **Michigan should not allow practices that have been proven to spread pollution, disease, invasive species in our waterways.**

Commercial fish farms would dump thousands of pounds of concentrated, phosphorus-laden fish waste directly into the Great Lakes, which are already seeing algae blooms and dead zones from high nutrient concentrations. A large fish farm could occupy 5 to 10 acres of open waters. **Annually, a typical 200,000 fish farm operation creates as much waste as a city of 65,000 people.** And in a net-pen system there is no way to trap or treat waste. That amount of nutrient heavy waste would have long term, negative impacts on our lakes. Canadian authorities have not issued a new permit for aquaculture in more than 20 years after a commercial fish farm was closed due to nutrient overloads. **That closed site showed high nutrient levels more than a decade after its closure.**

These operations could also pose risk to Michigan jobs, tourism, and recreation industries. Net-pen Aquaculture in the Great Lakes creates a high risk of disease spreading from these farms to our wild fish populations. It also creates ideal conditions for the interbreeding of farmed fish with wild stock. **This puts at risk the \$4 billion sport fishing industry already operating in Michigan for an industry that *if fully developed* could provide fewer than 50 statewide jobs.** It is clear that this is a case of a few private companies promising just a handful of jobs by bringing commercial fish farms into the Great Lakes and in return they would use the Great Lakes as a massive fish waste dump, and put the entire aquatic ecosystem at risk.

Great Lakes fish farming is not worth the risk. Instead of risking our Great Lakes, the state should focus on creating a level playing field for responsible forms of sustainable aquaculture.

MLCV Policy recommendations:

- Promote responsible aquaculture by allowing only flow through, re-circulating, land-based systems that treat their waste.
- Prohibit any net-pen aquaculture facility within the Great Lakes and any flow through systems in inland lakes and rivers.