My name is Jim Parsons. I'm currently the Chief Executive Officer of Jamestown Seafood, a tribal enterprise of the Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe and the President of the Northwest Aquaculture Alliance. I have served our farming community as the President of the National Aquaculture Association and remain a member of its Board of Directors and served on the U.S. Secretary of Commerce's Marine Fisheries Advisory Committee for two terms as an aquaculture advisor.

I began my work in rearing aquatic animals in 1976 as a research fisheries biologist in Oregon and have been raising fish and shellfish ever since. I hold a bachelor's degree in Fisheries from Humbolt State and earned a master's degree in Genetics from Washington State University.

You have heard a story from aquaculture detractors that is woefully incomplete and tragically outdated.

Yes, one net pen array collapsed in Washington in 2017. And yes, it resulted in a thorough examination of the use of our marine waters to produce fish.

Consequently, the Washington legislature passed legislation in 2018 which phased out the farming of non-native fish species, while allowing for the continued net pen farming of native species.

What you won't hear from the anti-farming activists is how the Washington legislature tasked the relevant agencies - Washington Departments of Agriculture, Ecology, Fish and Wildlife, and Natural Resources, to develop and publish a guidance document to allow for continued net pen fish farming in Washington.

That 144-page report holds 230 scientific references, and was carefully produced after an intensive four-year, multi-agency examination of best practices, and contains additional input from the NOAA's National Center for Coastal Science. It provides recommendations for Best Practices for continued net pen farming of fish in marine waters.

You also won't hear from these activist groups that in 2022 NOAA issued an Endangered Species Act Section 7(a)(2) Biological Opinion Regarding Marine Finfish Rearing Facilities, which concluded that native species farming in Puget Sound is not likely to jeopardize the continued existence, nor result in

the destruction or adverse modification of the designated critical habitats for any of the listed species.

During the development of both of these important works of science and policy, from 2018-2022, the farms that operated in-water farms in Washington's Puget Sound applied and received permission from the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife to farm sterile native rainbow trout. This permission was challenged all the way to the Washington Supreme Court by these same environmental groups, where the continued ability to farm fish was upheld in a 9-0 vote. Indeed, two complete production cycles of these sterile trout were completed without incident before, in a purely political move, Washington's Department of Natural Resources (DNR) refused to renew the aquatic lands leases where these farms were operating.

Although the Tribal Leadership of the Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe provided DNR with a substantial rebuttal based upon sound science to this proposed rule banning net pen production in Washington marine waters, complete with a substantial scientific reference list, it was neither acknowledged nor referenced in any of the materials that lead the Commissioners to support the ban of this farming practice.

Well-regulated, local aquaculture is an environmental solution we should be embracing, supporting, and developing. It helps meet growing protein demand without deforestation, excessive freshwater use, or the habitat destruction seen in other forms of protein production.

And most importantly, without local aquaculture, we will continue to import more than 85 percent of the seafood consumed in this country, relying on the carbon-heavy importation of fresh seafood on airplanes and ships from overseas. I would also like to share that alarming data with you.

In 2023, the USDA's Foreign Agriculture Service import data shows that over 520,000 metric tons, or 1.1 billion pounds of farmed trout and salmon were imported into the US with a value of over 6.2 billion dollars.

It's clear that the American consumer has embraced these products as an important part of our diets. And, from a global environmental impact

standpoint, this is a good thing since a variety of recent studies have concluded that farm-raised salmonids have the lowest GHG impacts of all edible animal production at between 3.5-5 kg CO2 e per kg edible product.

However, if you then put these fish products on a plane, as they are mostly imported fresh from Chile and Norway, that impact goes up to nearly 30kg CO2 e per kg. That additional amount means that our US demand for farmed salmonids is causing an unnecessary addition of 13 MILLION METRIC TONS, or 28 BILLION POUNDS, of GHG above the emissions caused by raising it.

I urge you to both consider the information is not being provided to you by the groups opposed to net pen farming and the true environmental impact of that decision on our global and national environmental health. As you prepare to vote please keep these things in mind:

The information you have received from this Bill's sponsors and their activists is incomplete and extremely outdated. This process is flawed.

Please take the time to get it right.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide my comments on this critical matter that impacts our Nation's seafood supply.