

Submitter: Kevin Bright

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, and Water

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2965

I strongly oppose HB 2965. If we are going to eat something, we as humans need to figure out how to grow it. Our human population can quickly outstrip what Mother Nature can supply. Terrestrial agriculture was not a luxury, it was a necessity for survival, as human populations increased beyond the carrying capacity of the wild food supplies around them. We need to do the exact same thing for the wild populations of aquatic organisms we have relied on, and harvested as a food source in the past. This is the blue revolution and it will be necessary for our future to support the additional 1.5 billion people that will be added to the global population in the next 25 years (9.7 billion by, 2050. UNFAO ). It will also be needed to keep the ocean's wild capture fishery populations from collapsing under the ever increasing pressure of human demand for seafood.

Over 30% of global wild capture fisheries are considered to be overfished, meaning their populations are being harvested at a greater rate than they can reproduce. Those fisheries are in decline, and will eventually collapse. The other 2/3rds of global capture fisheries are at their maximum sustainable yield, or what is termed "fully exploited." There are not more fish in the ocean than we can possibly catch now. Capture fisheries around the world collapsed long before net pen aquaculture came into existence, and in areas where no net pen aquaculture ever existed at all. In a brief period of time, we humans have commercially harvested many aquatic species beyond their sustainable limits. In as little as 100 years, we have seen salmon species along the entire west coast, from California, Oregon and Washington, rapidly decline or collapse. We can lay some of the blame on dams, logging and industrial development along rivers and estuaries in these states. History and data however, clearly demonstrate that when humans begin to commercially harvest populations of wild animals and plants, we can quickly decimate any natural populations.

Commercial harvesting of Olympia oysters, abalone, wild ducks, geese, buffalo, deer, and sea otters are just a few examples of humans taking more than nature can produce. Even Alaska, before statehood, witnessed the populations of wild salmon begin to plummet rapidly during the 1940's as fishwheels, fish traps, and other industrialized and unregulated commercial harvesting took it's toll. Alaska back then, and still today is a vast, undeveloped and unspoiled natural environment. Logging, dams, industrial development were not the cause of the decline, nor were net pens. Overharvesting of what nature can produce was the cause for the decline. Fortunately Alaska became a state, and quickly developed fishery regulations and harvest management tools that kept their fish stocks from going extinct. Alaska also developed a large salmon hatchery system (aquaculture) to help augment and support the numbers of harvestable fish they could catch. We need aquaculture. It

replants what we harvest from the oceans. Shellfish aquaculture is an easy example of how we replant the seed stock of what we harvest so the population is sustained and not being depleted.

Responsible aquaculture supports the sustainability of wild fisheries by producing seed and meeting human seafood demand. The United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization, the Nature Conservancy, the World Wildlife Fund, NOAA, and global fisheries scientists, all recognize that aquaculture is essential to reducing pressure on wild fish stocks while providing a stable, climate-friendly source of seafood. We are facing unprecedented challenges in the future with energy, food security and big issues that will need innovation and science to help us adapt and lighten our foot print on this earth. Needlessly banning a potential future solution to sustainable local food supplies, food security, carbon reduction and job creation is not how we will meet this challenge.

Please vote no on HB 2965