



**DEPARTMENT OF  
NATURAL RESOURCES**

**OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER  
OF PUBLIC LANDS**

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[WWW.DNR.WA.GOV](http://WWW.DNR.WA.GOV)

August 2, 2021

Jim Parsons, General Manager  
Cooke Aquaculture Pacific

Dear Mr. Parsons,

The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is aware that Cooke is on the verge of obtaining a fish transfer permit from WDFW for the transfer of approximately 365,000 triploid steelhead to the Hope Island facility. As you know, this facility is operating under Aquatic Lands Net Pen Lease No. 20-B12356 (Lease). The term of this Lease is set to expire on March 31, 2022.

DNR has been working cooperatively with Cooke in recent months to ensure that **all** provisions of the Lease are fully complied with.

There is one aspect of compliance we have not discussed and I think it is important to note in writing in the interest of transparency. Section 2.3 of the lease makes keeping current and complying with all conditions and terms of any permits, licenses, certificates, regulations, ordinances, statutes, and other governmental rules and regulations a material term of the Lease. DNR observes that there is risk if Cooke proceeds with the transfer, given the pending appeal of the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife's environmental review for the transfer permit that is at the state Supreme Court. If that appeal were to lead to a reversal of the WDFW transfer permit, fish would be present without the necessary permit, which would put Cooke out of compliance with Section 2.3 of the Lease. That would create a default that likely could not be cured pursuant to the provisions of Section 14 of the Lease.

There is a second element of risk that, again, I bring up in the interest of transparency. DNR has only just begun evaluating Cooke's request to renew the Lease, has not made a decision on that request yet, and may decide not to renew the Lease, and not to allow Cooke to continue in holdover once the Lease expires. Put another way, DNR has made no decisions regarding the Lease following the Termination Date next March. Consequently, Cooke should recognize that it is assuming a risk that it may have to remove these fish from the Hope Island facility prior to the 14-16 months needed for grow out.

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I do not believe these points should be a surprise, but believe it is important to put them in writing to ensure that Cooke understands the risks associated with the intended re-stocking.

If you have any questions, please give me a call.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Katrina Lassiter', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Katrina Lassiter  
Interim Deputy Supervisor for Aquatic Resources