



Kona Blue Water Farms

Kona, Hawai`i

A Division of Black Pearls, Inc.

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January 31, 2003

R.e.: UPDATE ON KBWF'S PROPOSAL FOR AN

OPEN OCEAN FISH FARM OFF UNUALOHA POINT, KONA

We have spent the last two years in discussions with the community, kupuna from the area, shoreline interests and other conservation groups. As yet, we have not encountered any strong objections to our proposal. However, there has been some opposition to the proposed Ahi Nui tuna farm, in Kohala. For clarification, we would like to provide the following brief update on our project, and its potential impacts :

- We will only culture species native to Hawaii. Initially, we will grow mahimahi and kahala (amberjack). We hope to expand this to opakapaka, ehū, and hapu'upu'u, as we develop the hatchery techniques through our research program. All of our farmed fish will be hatchery-reared. We will only feed our fish with pellet food, and we will only have six grow-out cages in a central 9 acre area.
- Opposition to offshore fish farming is usually fueled by two types of disinformation. Firstly, the environmental impacts of aquaculture are often misrepresented, using data based on outdated practices in the salmon farming industry from Norway or Canada from 20 or more years ago. These opinions choose to ignore the dramatic new developments in engineering in the last five years that now allow fish farming to move offshore, into the open ocean. The moi farm off Ewa Beach, for example, is now producing over 5,000 lbs of moi per week, yet it has had almost no measurable effect on water quality, and no effect on the nearby coral reefs.
- Secondly, some members of the community have a sense that leasing and monitoring of open ocean aquaculture will be an unregulated, ad hoc process that will favor development interests to the detriment of the environment. There is little public awareness about the rigorous State requirements and Federal oversight of the leasing process, under Chapter 190 D (HRS). These include :
 - a State CDUA permit (with accompanying EA or EIS), which includes extensive consultation with the community, and assessment of any potential impacts, public hearings, and separate Land Board approvals of both the project, and the lease terms,
 - a State DOH Clean Water Branch permit, under the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System, with terms defined by the Federal Clean Water Act, and with oversight by EPA,

- a Federal Department of the Army Permit, issued by Army Corps of Engineers, for compliance with all Federal regulations, including oversight by USFWS (for endangered species), NMFS (for marine mammals), and Coast Guard (for impacts on navigation),
 - a State DOH Solid Waste Disposal permit, for any solid wastes generated, and
 - a State Aquaculture License, with regular reporting requirements, for commercial culture of any State-regulated species.
- To keep in compliance with these permits, we will have to establish a regular monitoring and reporting system for :
 - all relevant water quality parameters (turbidity, nitrogen, phosphorus, etc),
 - benthic communities (including fish, corals and other invertebrates on the sand substrate below the farm, and the inshore coral reefs),
 - any interaction between the farm and endangered species or marine mammals,
 - numbers, status, and disposition of any State-regulated species

The principals in KBWF – Dale and Neil - are both biologists. We live here in Kona, and we dive, surf and fish in these waters. Our hatchery facility – and the future of our fish farm - relies on the cleanliness of the water that comes through the NELHA system.

We believe that open ocean fish farming offers great potential for Kona. It is a rational, sustainable development of Hawaii’s marine resources, offering a high-value product, opening up local employment opportunities, and aiding in the diversification of our economy. It can and should be closely integrated with aquaculture activities at NELHA.

For more information, please review our draft EA on the web, or contact either : Dr Dale Sarver, President, or Neil Anthony Sims V.P. / Research Director
