



**Friends of
the Earth**

Concerns and Talking Points: Industrial Ocean Fish Farming

Industrial ocean fish farming is a form of aquaculture that involves the mass cultivation of finfish in net pens, pods, and cages, allowing for free exchange between the farm and the ocean ecosystem. These floating factory farms have numerous risks to public health, the environment and the economy, including:

- **Catastrophic fish spills;**

Farmed fish spills can involve non-native species – such as Cooke Aquaculture’s release of more than 263,000 Atlantic salmon into Washington State’s waterways – and in extremely large numbers. Escaped fish can spread disease, risk interbreeding and genetic degradation, and compete with native, wild fish stocks for limited resources and habitat.

- **Release of chemicals, agricultural drugs, and untreated fish waste;**

Industrial ocean fish farms use chemicals and heavy metals, including copper, on their structures and nets to prevent corrosion and fouling. They use agricultural drugs, such as antibiotics, on the farmed fish. Finally, the farms directly discharge excess feed and untreated fish waste. All of these pollutants leech into the ocean, causing harm to the ocean water and seabed, as well as marine life.

- **Corporate control** of seafood production;

Industrial ocean fish farms are owned and operated by mega-corporations, like Cooke Aquaculture. Corporate-driven goals such as expansion and profits come first, at the expense of sustainability, safety and product quality. Further, corporate-centric structures reduce the choices you have as a consumer, and put competition out of business.

- **Threats of harm to native wildlife;**

Industrial ocean fish farms attract wildlife to congregate around fish cages, which then get entangled in nets, harassed by acoustic deterrents, and hunted. In March 2017, an endangered monk seal died in the nets of an industrial seafood farm in Hawaii.

These harms are just the tip of the iceberg. Industrial ocean fish farms are leading to the **overfishing of forage species** by relying on fish oil and fish meal to feed their farmed fish populations, and are increasingly using unhealthy **GMO ingredients** in fish feed. Underwater factory farms are also **putting wild-capture fishing communities out of business**, creating unnecessary **competition for marine waters**, and imposing **hazardous work conditions**.

The time is now to stand up to these underwater factory farms!
Keep them out of our oceans!