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Fish farm jobs should be environmentally sustainable

I read with interest an op-ed piece in another Nova Scotia newspaper about "fish farm supporters reel in members". The just of the article is that fin aquaculture is good for the community and young people can obtain jobs and stay at home. Sherri Harris says her employment as a Cooke contractor has nothing to do with her support for open pen expansion in the area.

If open pen fin aquaculture is so clean and pristine why is Ms. Harris not arguing to have the three additional sites proposed placed in Shelburne Harbour? Could the pollution, stink and other negative impacts on the environment have anything to do with it?

In speaking about the area youth heading west seeking employment, Ms. Harris argues the new open pen farms and "maybe" a processing plant in Shelburne will keep them at home. My question is how will jobs at \$11 an hour (Cooke's going rate for labourers) keep any one from heading west where workers at McDonald's in Alberta make \$20 an hour? Truckers make \$30 to \$35 an hour? Nice try.

No one, including Ms. Harris, relate new jobs to the environment. Its OK to pollute the environment, as long as we get some jobs, seems to be the order of the day of industry and government. Take for example biomass harvesting, open pit

mining and open pen aquaculture. Shouldn't the environment be the number one concern and not trampled by excess and greed?

I wonder what the little guy from Milton, Premier Dexter, thinks about shelling out in excess of \$100 million, of taxpayer's dollars, to Cooke to create jobs at just above minimum wage in Shelburne and Digby Counties? For that kind of money maybe the Minister of Fisheries/Environment, Mr. Belliveau, can take off the rose coloured glasses and do some good for the fisheries and environment. Why not continue to support aquaculture industry in an environmentally sustainable way and have future sites land based in closed contained tanks? Build a new processing plant in the Shelburne area and the necessary closed contained tanks adjacent to the plant. This way our tax dollars will be put to good use in construction jobs, as well, other jobs will be available to those seeking same.

I'm not sure if this will impact Ms. Harris trucking contract, however, if it does she can apply for one of the \$11 labourer jobs at the processing plant.

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