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PUBLIC HEARING ON EPA'S DRAFT NATIONAL POLLUTANT
DISCHARGE ELIMINATION SYSTEM (NPDES) PERMIT
KAMPACHI FARMS, LLC - PERMIT NUMBER FLOA00001

JANUARY 28, 2020

Mote Marine Laboratory
WAVE Center
1600 Ken Thompson Parkway
Sarasota, Florida 34236
5:31 p.m. to 9:22 p.m.

TRANSCRIPT OF PUBLIC HEARING

Job No. CS3828654

Stenographically reported by Mary Ann Smith,
Registered Professional Reporter, Registered Merit
Reporter, Notary Public, State of Florida at Large.

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APPEARANCES :

Jeaneanne Gettle (Presiding Officer)
Director, Water Division
U.S. EPA Region 4
Christopher B. Thomas
Chief, Permitting & Grants Branch
Water Division
U.S. EPA Region 4

Jan Connery (Facilitator)
ERG, EPA Contractor

1 P R O C E E D I N G S

2 JEANEANNE GETTLE: Good evening. If you will
3 take your seats. If everyone will take their
4 seat, please.

5 Good evening. I am Jeaneanne Gettle. I am
6 the Director of the Water Division at the United
7 States Environmental Protection Agency in Region
8 4's office in Atlanta, Georgia. EPA's Regional
9 Administrator, Mary Walker, has designated me as
10 the presiding officer for this hearing. There
11 are several others from the EPA here with me
12 tonight, including Chris Thomas, who is sitting
13 beside me at the table here in the front.

14 Let me start by thanking each of you for
15 taking the time to be here this evening. We
16 recognize that the Gulf of Mexico is a critically
17 important natural resource of the State of
18 Florida and for our nation. We are holding this
19 public hearing as part of EPA's administrative
20 process in considering issuance of a National
21 Pollutant Discharge Elimination System, or, as we
22 refer to it, NPDES, permit for an aquatic animal
23 production facility also known as an aquaculture
24 facility.

25 The facility would be located approximately

1 43 miles southwest of Sarasota, Florida, in
2 federal waters in the Gulf of Mexico. The permit
3 applicant is Kampachi Farms, LLC, and it's known
4 as the Velella Epsilon facility.

5 An NPDES permit is the basic tool that EPA
6 uses for controlling discharges of water
7 pollution. The Clean Water Act requires that
8 NPDES permits include pollutant limits and
9 conditions necessary to protect water quality.

10 The proposed NPDES permit is the control
11 mechanism for the discharge of pollutants from an
12 aquaculture facility.

13 The NPDES permit does not address the
14 construction of any structure on the sea floor or
15 within the water column above the sea floor and
16 its location in the Gulf. Those entities are
17 regulated separately by the U.S. Army Corps of
18 Engineers under a separate permit program.

19 The conditions in this specific draft permit
20 were established pursuant to the Clean Water Act
21 and rules promulgated pursuant to the Clean Water
22 Act. Since this discharge is offshore in the
23 Gulf of Mexico, there are no state water quality
24 standards that are applicable; however, EPA is
25 required to include conditions and requirements

1 in the permit to ensure that discharges will not
2 cause unreasonable degradation of marine
3 environment.

4 The main sources of pollutants at issue for
5 discharge from an aquaculture operation such as
6 this facility are from uneaten fish feed, fish
7 feces from the fish being raised, and drugs used
8 at the site to treat certain diseases. Under the
9 provisions of the draft NPDES permit, the
10 permittee would have to comply with a variety of
11 conditions to limit the impact of the discharge
12 on the environment. The NPDES permit includes a
13 comprehensive environmental monitoring plan that
14 requires monitoring for water quality parameters
15 as well as sediment and biological sampling both
16 up and down-current of the facility.

17 As part of the process for issuing the
18 proposed permit, EPA has also undertaken an
19 analysis of environmental impacts from the
20 proposed discharge and alternatives to the
21 proposed discharge pursuant to the National
22 Environmental Policy Act, or NEPA. The draft
23 NEPA document was developed with EPA as the lead
24 agency and with two cooperating federal agencies,
25 the National Marine Fishery Service, and the

1 United States Army Corps of Engineers. That
2 process led to the completion of an Environmental
3 Assessment and a proposed Finding of No
4 Significant Impact on the environment from the
5 discharge by the facility.

6 As with EPA's draft permit, the Environmental
7 Assessment and the draft proposed Finding of No
8 Significant Impact have also been made available
9 for public review and comment. The NEPA
10 evaluation has its own public comment period and
11 has been running concurrent with the comment
12 period for the draft permit, and at this hearing
13 EPA will take and consider comments both on the
14 NEPA analysis, the draft Finding of No
15 Significant Impact, and on the draft NPDES
16 permit.

17 EPA's permit process has included complying
18 with other applicable laws by consulting with
19 other federal and state agencies with
20 responsibilities for implementing programs
21 intended to protect environmental resources such
22 as fish and wildlife, including threatened and
23 endangered species. The specific consultations
24 and consistency determinations conducted with
25 federal or state agencies during the NPDES permit

1 issuance process were under the Endangered
2 Species Act with the National Marine Fishery
3 Service and the United States Fish & Wildlife
4 Service, and essential fish habitat consultations
5 to comply with certain provisions of the
6 Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and
7 Management Act with the National Marine Fishery
8 Service, a Fish and Wildlife Consultation Act
9 consultation with the National Marine Fishery
10 Service, a National Historic Preservation Act
11 consultation was conducted with the Florida
12 Department of Environmental Protection, a Coastal
13 Zone Management Act consultation with the Florida
14 Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services,
15 and a Florida Coastal Management Program
16 consultation with the Florida Fish and Wildlife
17 Conservation Commission.

18 The purpose of this evening's hearing is for
19 EPA to listen to oral comments and receive any
20 written comments that you would like to provide
21 concerning the draft Clean Water Act, NPDES
22 permit, and all supporting documents including
23 the draft Environmental Assessment and the
24 Finding of No Significant Impact.

25 Any specific information you have with regard

1 to the proposed facility and the potential impact
2 to the waters it will discharge to will be
3 particularly helpful. EPA's role here tonight is
4 to listen. During this hearing, my EPA
5 colleagues and I may occasionally ask a question
6 of clarification, but we will not otherwise be
7 engaging or responding to the comments.

8 A court reporter is present to record and
9 prepare a transcript of the public hearing and
10 the transcript will become part of the official
11 administrative record for this permit. In
12 addition, you can continue to provide written
13 comments until February 4, 2020, as described in
14 one of the handouts available this evening. And
15 the handouts are on the table out front. All
16 comments and information provided this evening
17 and up to February 4th will be considered by EPA
18 before making a final decision about the draft
19 NPDES permit.

20 As I indicated, Mr. Thomas is sitting at the
21 front table with me. Mr. Thomas or I will remain
22 at the front table during the entire proceeding.
23 If one of us steps down for a few minutes, I want
24 to assure you all that your comments will still
25 be recorded and considered.

1 As I said earlier, we have handouts available
2 at the front table. There is a public notice
3 which spells out how you can file written
4 comments on the draft permit, the NEPA analysis,
5 and all supporting documents. There is another
6 handout with a list of web addresses where you
7 can find additional information on the NPDES
8 program, and a web address with information
9 particular to this draft permit, including the
10 draft permit itself, the NEPA analysis, and draft
11 findings and other relevant documents. This
12 document also summarizes the key conditions and
13 requirements contained in the permit and you may
14 request to receive a hard copy of those documents
15 using information on the public notice.

16 Following the close of the public comment
17 period on February 4, 2020, EPA will review and
18 consider all comments received during the public
19 comment period, both in writing and at today's
20 public hearing. EPA will prepare a document
21 known as a Response to Comments that will briefly
22 describe and address significant issues raised
23 during the comment period and what provisions, if
24 any, in the draft permit have changed as a result
25 of the comments received and the reasons for the

1 changes. A public notice of the final NPDES
2 permit decision will be published in the Sarasota
3 Herald Tribune.

4 In addition, the notice of availability of
5 all supporting documents, the Response to
6 Comments, and the final permit decision will be
7 mailed or e-mailed to everyone that commented on
8 the draft permit for which EPA has a mailing or
9 e-mail address. The complete final permit
10 decision and Response to Comments will be
11 available on the EPA website as well.

12 Within 30 days following notice of a final
13 permit decision, any person who files comments on
14 the draft permit or participated in this public
15 hearing may submit a petition for review of the
16 permit decision to EPA's Environmental Appeals
17 Board, consistent with 40 C.F.R. Section 124.19.
18 In addition, any person who fails to file
19 comments or participate in this public hearing
20 may petition for review of any permit condition
21 in the final permit decision, but only to the
22 extent that those final permit conditions reflect
23 changes from the draft permit.

24 I want to emphasize at this point that no
25 final NPDES or NEPA decision has been made.

1 After considering all the comments, data, and
2 information received through February 4th, EPA's
3 regional administrator, Mary Walker, will make a
4 final decision.

5 At this point, I'm going to turn it over to
6 our facilitator and we will start to hear
7 comments from you. Thank you very much for being
8 here. We appreciate you taking your time to be
9 here.

10 JAN CONNERY: Thank you very much, Jeaneanne.

11 My name is Jan Connery. I'm with ERG. We're
12 a contractor to EPA. As Jeaneanne said, I will
13 be serving as your facilitator this evening.
14 It's great to see so many folks come out for this
15 hearing.

16 My role as your facilitator is to make sure
17 that everyone here understands the format and
18 agenda and process, and then to administer the
19 process fairly and transparently and help us all
20 maintain a respectful and courteous environment
21 with a particular goal tonight of helping us hear
22 from as many commenters as possible during the
23 time we have available.

24 I would like to start by briefly reviewing
25 the agenda, which is very simple because the

1 purpose of this meeting, as Jeaneanne said, is
2 very simple. It's for EPA to hear public
3 comments. And so after my remarks about how the
4 process is going to work, the entire rest of this
5 meeting, except the last very few minutes, is
6 devoted to hearing your comments.

7 At the very end Jeaneanne will make brief
8 closing remarks, very brief closing remarks, and
9 we will, just heads up, need to have a hard stop
10 here at 9:30 p.m. per requirements of this
11 facility. Because we have had such a high volume
12 of interest in folks who want to make public
13 comments this evening, we are not going to be
14 taking a break, but we certainly understand that
15 you may need to stand up and stretch your legs or
16 if you need to take a call or something you can
17 go outside. And we have restrooms at either side
18 of this room in the back. The men's room is over
19 there and the women's room is right over there.

20 I'd like to start with -- well, a couple of
21 other logistic remarks just so we get this out of
22 the way. Folks, if you haven't turned off your
23 cell phones or silenced them, pagers, anything
24 that beeps, please take a moment to do that now.
25 And I know you're all familiar with this exit and

1 entrance because you just came in there, that is
2 our main entrance and exit, but in the event of
3 emergency I just want to point out that we have a
4 couple of other places to exit. There is one
5 right at the back there and there's one over
6 here. So, in the very unlikely event of an
7 emergency, please proceed to the nearest exit.

8 I'm going to get to how the public comment
9 process works in a moment, but I want to
10 emphasize some basic kind of ground rules for the
11 meeting or, as I prefer to say, ways in which we
12 can all work together to make this a productive
13 meeting.

14 You can see we have a very full house, which
15 is great. We've got about at least 66 folks who
16 preregistered to comment, probably some others
17 who walked in and would like to comment as well.
18 We've got well over 120 people who are not here
19 to comment tonight, but are here to listen along
20 with EPA. So, therefore, it's really important
21 that throughout this entire meeting we maintain a
22 listening environment out of respect for those
23 who took the time to be here this evening.

24 So, while anyone is talking, any of our
25 commenters, please maintain silence. And if you

1 do need to get up for any reason, if you could
2 try to time it when the person at the microphone
3 has just ended their comment, that would be
4 appreciated.

5 Please help us all maintain a courteous and
6 respectful environment. I do need to mention, if
7 there are any disruptions it's only going to slow
8 the process and reduce the number of commenters
9 that we'll be able to take.

10 You may have observed we have a few officers
11 with us this evening and they've asked me also to
12 mention that in the event that there are any
13 disruptors they will be asked to leave or
14 escorted out as necessary by the Sarasota Police
15 Department or Federal Protective Service
16 Officers.

17 So now we get to the public comments and the
18 process. And just an overview, we're going to
19 take folks in two main batches. We had a long
20 registration period that ended about 5:30
21 yesterday when folks could preregister for
22 comments, so we're going to take those folks
23 first. And I hope that all of you who did
24 register when you walked in the door and you were
25 given a time slot, because we're going to be

1 taking folks in the order in which they walked in
2 the door and the time slots they were given with
3 preregistered commenters first.

4 And then as time is allowed, and we certainly
5 hope that it will allow, we're going to do our
6 best to allow as many comments as possible, we
7 will take folks who registered to comment as they
8 walked in this evening. And, folks, if you did
9 that, each of you should have an alphabetical
10 letter. We'll be taking you in order of those
11 alphabetical letters when that time comes. And
12 if you wanted to comment and you don't have one
13 of those, this would be a good time to visit the
14 front desk and make sure to pick up one of those
15 so we can, hopefully, work you in for a comment.

16 Now, as Jeaneanne mentioned, you can also
17 make written comments and we encourage you to do
18 that. We determined on Friday, because of the
19 large volume of commenters, that we needed really
20 to ask everyone to stay within a three-minute
21 limit so that we could accommodate as many people
22 as possible. And so I expect there may be many
23 of you who have more to say and whether or not
24 you're making a comment, whether three minutes is
25 your complete comment or you have more to say,

1 you are encouraged to also comment in writing.

2 And I anticipate that many of you have
3 brought written versions of your comments with
4 you. If you have, we've got two baskets for you
5 I want you to be aware of. There's one over
6 here. So if you're making a comment you can just
7 leave it there on your way out if you run out
8 over here.

9 And then we've got a basket over there by the
10 exit so if any of you, whether or not you're
11 making oral comments, want to leave a written
12 comment on your way out, please do that at any
13 time. They're highly encouraged.

14 So now let's get to how this comment process
15 is going to work, how are we going to sort of
16 work together to efficiently help as many people
17 to comment as possible. So this is particularly
18 oriented towards those who are making oral
19 comments. You will be speaking from this
20 microphone.

21 And, in the interest of having efficient
22 logistics, what we'd like to do is get folks cued
23 up so that -- and we've got a waiting area over
24 here to the left. You see those three chairs
25 over to the side here. We've got three chairs

1 over to the side here. Whichever is closest for
2 you. So we're going to ask folks to cue up.

3 So let me give you an example. As we start
4 out, the person who has number 1 -- somebody has
5 a number one in this audience? Oh, there you
6 are. Great. Okay. So you will be our first
7 person up here at the microphone.

8 And who has 2, 3, and 4? Okay. Great.
9 Three folks on this side. So what you might want
10 to do then is go sit in those chairs and, that
11 way, as soon as the person here who's commenting
12 to begin with has finished in about three minutes
13 and she'll be going back to her seat, then the
14 person who is number 2 will come right up to the
15 microphone and we can begin the next comment.

16 And so a heads up, 2 plus 3 is 5, so then
17 whoever has 5, we would like them to come up to
18 either side, whichever is most convenient for
19 you. Ideally, if you could, around the edges
20 when you come up to the waiting area and that way
21 we will always have three folks in the cue.

22 I realize this might sound a little
23 confusing, so I'm happy to give reminders as you
24 need them. If I don't see three folks up here, I
25 will certainly be doing that to help you out.

1 So what's going to happen when you come up to
2 make your comment, we'd like you to start with
3 your name and affiliation. And if you forget to
4 say that, I'll remind you. At that point we do
5 have a timekeeper who's sitting up here with me,
6 and he's going to start the timing after you've
7 stated your name and affiliation, the
8 organization you represent. And that might be
9 yourself, by the way, for many folks.

10 And then at two and-a-half minutes we've got
11 a sign we're just going to -- I'm just going to
12 hold it up so the person who's here can see it.
13 That's just 30 seconds left, please think about
14 wrapping up. And then as we get to the
15 three-minute mark. You will see me start to
16 stand after commenting, I'm sitting right there,
17 that will be your cue, please start to wrap it
18 up.

19 I'm not going to cut you off mid sentence.
20 We want to be courteous. We want folks to be
21 able to, you know, come to the end of the
22 sentence at least, but we also appreciate your
23 cooperation in sticking to the time so that we
24 can have a fair process for everyone and include
25 as many folks as possible. So when you're done

1 you will just go back to your seat and then the
2 next person will come right up and we'll do that
3 same process again and again for folks.

4 And if by any chance, this probably won't
5 happen, but you took a little nap or something
6 and you realized, oh, wait, I didn't -- somehow I
7 missed my number, that's okay. Just kind of give
8 me a hand wave and I'm happy to have you come up
9 and we'll fit you right in. If somehow we passed
10 you by, we definitely want to put you in.

11 And I just want to say one more thing.
12 Again, I hope you don't need it, but if someone
13 is just up here too long and not willing to leave
14 when asked, we have the possibility of the
15 presiding officer may ask for them to be muted.
16 So I hope we don't need to go there, but that
17 could happen if we needed to.

18 And that pretty much covers it. Yeah. So I
19 think we're ready to begin. Let's get started.

20 Yes. If you have a question?

21 AUDIENCE MEMBER: I just need my sign.

22 JAN CONNERY: Oh, okay. That's fine. Lots
23 of signs.

24 So the person who's our first commenter with
25 number 1, please would you come up. And then we

1 have the folks who are 2, 3, and 4.

2 And I think we have a photo op. moment here,
3 so let's just take a pause while we get that
4 done. Okay.

5 Your mic is on. Please go ahead, starting
6 with your name and affiliation.

7 PAULEEN HOME: Good evening. My name is
8 Pauleen Home, and my affiliation is that I'm a
9 winter homeowner and resident of Lakewood Ranch.

10 Today I'm speaking against the proposed
11 floating fish farm off Sarasota. This is the
12 first aquaculture project of its kind in the Gulf
13 of Mexico, so we must get it right the first time
14 so we have no regrets in the future. The Gulf is
15 already facing so many challenges.

16 Kampachi, Inc., is doing impressive research
17 when it comes to the advancement of marine
18 aquaculture; however, the issue is their floating
19 net pen is the wrong solution for the shallower
20 warmer waters here off the coast of Sarasota.

21 Indeed, the facility description provided by the
22 EPA is more comparable than not to the Atlantic
23 salmon farms off the Atlantic and Pacific coasts.
24 If you do not already know, salmon farms around
25 the world have had a very poor track record. The

1 industry is learning, however, its impacts on the
2 marine environment have been abundant and clear
3 for those geographies that have gone before us.

4 Kampachi's floating cage tests have been in
5 the deep and colder ocean waters off the coast of
6 Hawaii. Their anchored test was at a depth of
7 6,000 feet. Here in the Gulf the cage will be
8 anchored at 130 feet in, what we know, the
9 shallower and warmer waters here, waters that can
10 reach a temperature of up to 90 degrees in the
11 summer season. While the cage can be lowered to
12 130 feet, in all probability the drop in water
13 temperature will not be enough for such a high
14 concentration of caged fish that we are told will
15 reach 88,000 pounds.

16 To escape the heat, the fish will need to go
17 deeper into their cage; however, the weight of
18 the fish stacking on top of each other in the
19 bottom of a cage that is 20 feet high has the
20 potential of cutting off oxygen and drowning the
21 fish. This actually happened. It happened last
22 September off the Atlantic Coast. There's not
23 enough time here tonight for me to go into more
24 detail; however, please consider there were
25 millions of pounds of decaying fish in the waters

1 and shores of those communities.

2 The EPA permit request says, and I quote, The
3 project will dump waste and unconsumed chemicals
4 into the surrounding waters and onto the seabed.
5 Why don't we just stop there.

6 So, in closing, do we have an option? Is
7 there a more sustainable way to raise domestic
8 fish? The answer is yes. We all know the future
9 is in closed-containment based systems. These
10 are highly engineered fish farming plants.

11 JAN CONNERY: You're going to have to wrap it
12 up.

13 PAULEEN HOME: Okay. I just wanted to close
14 by saying, and some of you already know this,
15 Miami and Washington State are leading the way in
16 North America as early adopters of this
17 state-of-the-art land-based technique.
18 Washington State has already passed that
19 legislation. Canada is about to pass it. So why
20 are we still considering this?

21 JAN CONNERY: Thank you. Thank you very
22 much. If you would like to leave a copy of your
23 written comments, I hope you will leave them
24 there.

25 Who has the second number? And if anyone has

1 number 5, this would be a good time. Okay. Very
2 good.

3 Oh, do you need some help there?

4 JEANEANNE GETTLE: Why don't we just let her
5 hold the mic. You can just hold the mic.

6 DIANA CABLE: Can you hear me?

7 JEANEANNE GETTLE: Yes.

8 DIANA CABLE: Okay. Hi. My name is Diana
9 Cable. I'm a homeowner in Longboat Key and I'm
10 against the fish farming.

11 Right now in 21st century we're learning that
12 the earth needs to be cared for. Our greatest
13 issue must be global warming, which we, as a
14 people have got to address. Water.

15 We have learned that our fresh water source
16 requires our care, that fracking for oil
17 threatens the water which life depends upon, and
18 we have learned that our oceans are not immune to
19 the misuse of industry. Plastics proliferate in
20 the sea as we use and dispose of it, oil
21 threatens it. The Gulf has not recovered from
22 the 2014 Deepwater Horizon spill, the 2004 Gulf
23 tanker oil spill off the Louisiana coast, which
24 is ongoing and poised to surpass the more
25 palliatized Deepwater Horizon in the volume of

1 oil leaked into the Gulf. Red tide has to do
2 with pollutants in the water.

3 This would be the context for our discussion
4 of the risky proposal we're debating today. The
5 giant floating fish cage will leak into the Gulf
6 antibiotics and other chemicals along with fish
7 excrement posing a danger to the fish population
8 and contribute to the unnatural growth of toxic
9 algae blooms including red tide.

10 Denmark has prohibited offshore agriculture.
11 So is the State of Washington moving in the same
12 direction. We are living with an Administration
13 that refuses to acknowledge that the earth needs
14 to be cared for, that the sea is vulnerable as is
15 the atmosphere to our industrial misuse.

16 The whole economy of Florida requires a
17 healthy Gulf. The National Marine Fisheries
18 Service and NOAA should be protecting our fragile
19 Gulf water and not promoting aquaculture. What
20 we're discussing now is just the foot in the
21 door. We need to prohibit it right now. Thank
22 you.

23 JAN CONNERY: Thank you very much. We're
24 going to do number 3 now and whoever is number 6,
25 this would be a good time the come up.

1 DOUGLAS SMITH: My name is Douglas Smith. I
2 have a background in agriculture and farming and
3 I'm also a recreational fisherman. Since moving
4 to Florida I have had -- I've developed an
5 interest in aquaculture.

6 I am here to support this project based on
7 the facts set forth in the fact sheet that was
8 submitted to the EPA and not on unsubstantiated
9 beliefs that have created fear on the part of our
10 local residents.

11 This project is 45 miles offshore with
12 predominant currents away from Florida's coast.
13 There is no foundation for a belief that this
14 project will adversely impact Florida's coast and
15 coastal waters. The EPA has set forth criteria
16 for a point of source discharge that are designed
17 to be environmentally responsible and --

18 May we hold the signs until I fishing
19 speaking, please.

20 JAN CONNERY: You can speak to EPA.

21 DOUGLAS SMITH: Yes. Thank you.

22 EPA has sponsored -- the sponsor of this
23 demonstration offshore net pen not only meets the
24 EPA standards, but commits to apply Best
25 Management Practices that go beyond those

1 requirements. The facts predict no detectable
2 ammonia nitrogen beyond 30 meters from the net
3 pen and no detectable accumulation of particulate
4 waste distinguishable from the background levels.
5 The sponsors are required to monitor, as was said
6 during the introduction, the Environmental Impact
7 of this project to ensure that it meets those
8 predictions.

9 The Almaco Jack used in this project are
10 ideal. They are native to our waters. They are
11 not targeted by commercial fisherman. The fish
12 in the net pens are first generation progeny of
13 wild-caught Almaco and thus the Almaco in the
14 pens are no different than the Almaco that you
15 would catch in the water.

16 This project is supported by Dr. Nicole
17 Kirchhoff, CEO of Live Advantage Bait, LLC, who
18 has made her own written comments to the panel.
19 Dr. Kirchhoff's experience spans 15 years of
20 commercial aquaculture, including five years
21 working in Australia with a 12-company -- with
22 the 12 companies of the Southern Bluefin Tuna
23 Industry Association in their 88 commercial
24 offshore bluefin tuna cages as a fish health and
25 welfare researcher.

1 Her research published and peer-reviewed
2 journals demonstrate that fish caged offshore can
3 have similar health stress levels as wild fish.
4 In the first direct comparison of commercial
5 caged cultures near shore versus offshore, her
6 research demonstrated the further from the shore
7 or the bottom the cages are placed, the healthier
8 and more productive the fish.

9 Aquacultures rely on clean water for healthy
10 fish and an economic business model. Therefore,
11 the collapse of the local environment also leads
12 to the collapse of the aquaculture industry in
13 the way of economy.

14 The United States imports 90 percent of its
15 seafood and 50 percent of that seafood is farm
16 raised in environments that are beyond the
17 jurisdiction of the United States. It is
18 important that the United States promote
19 responsible forms of aquaculture within its
20 jurisdiction to meet the current growing demand
21 for the seafood in the United States. This
22 permit would do that.

23 JAN CONNERY: Are you representing yourself?
24 Thank you, Douglas. Representing himself for the
25 record.

1 And we will have number 3. And if you're
2 number 6 it's a good time to come up on either
3 side. 7, sorry. 7.

4 JOSEPH DAVIS: Hello. My name is Joseph
5 Davis. I'm speaking in support of the issuance
6 of the permit for the Kampachi fish farm
7 pilot-scale project. I represent no one except
8 for myself.

9 I live directly on the water on the small bay
10 that empties into Tampa Bay. I'm an avid
11 fisherman and a boater. I care deeply about the
12 quality of the Gulf water.

13 I've carefully read the draft Environmental
14 Assessment with its appendices and the draft
15 permit. I was very impressed with the
16 conscientious reviews by the many federal and
17 state agencies involved as well as the
18 engineering and scientific assessments included.

19 I bring to this review over 25 years
20 experience as an attorney and a senior manager in
21 a federal agency. It's not the first EPA
22 assessment I've seen. It is apparent that this
23 was not a short-cuttred process, it is not a
24 result from the Trump Administration cutting back
25 on environmental protections. What it is is a

1 rigorous process. And you may disagree with it,
2 but the facts are stated in it according to the
3 experts and according to subject matter experts.

4 In addition to the EPA, more than a half
5 dozen other federal agencies, some of which were
6 mentioned in the introduction, play a key role in
7 this review. Additionally, comments were sought
8 and considered in a number of Florida state
9 agencies, including the Florida Fish and Wildlife
10 Commission. Each of these federal and state
11 agencies agree with moving forward on this
12 project. After examining the model predictions,
13 including worst case scenarios, the EPA has made
14 a preliminary determination that issuance of the
15 NPDES permit, quote, Will not cause a significant
16 environmental impact to water quality or result
17 in any other significant impacts to human health
18 and the national environment.

19 I also want to note the proposed permit would
20 include ongoing monitoring and reporting
21 standards as well as a provision that allows the
22 EPA to reopen and modify the permit if unexpected
23 issues arise in the process. It's a short-term,
24 approximately one-year process as an experiment.
25 It's not a large, commercial fish farm.

1 It's well documented there is a dramatic
2 increase in the demand for seafood. It's also
3 without dispute that the United States is a very
4 minor aquaculture producer, but it's a leading
5 global importer of fish. Over half of this
6 imported seafood comes from aquaculture often
7 from countries who have lax environmental
8 standards and even laxer enforcement.

9 We need to do something to address this
10 issue. And the failure to do so will not only
11 create more pressure to increase catch limits and
12 encourage other nations fishing fleets to violate
13 our standards, we should trust the stats, we
14 should trust the scientists and the subject
15 matter experts as well as the reputable
16 organizations who are involved in this
17 experimental project.

18 JAN CONNERY: Thank you. Okay. Number 5.
19 And number 8, if you could come up to the waiting
20 area on either side.

21 THOMAS CAFFREY: Hello. My name is Tom
22 Caffrey. I'm not representing a group or
23 organization, but I think I'm trying to represent
24 the Gulf of Mexico waters.

25 So the lifeblood of Florida has always been

1 its abundant sunshine and pristine waters;
2 however, it's no secret to anyone that the
3 Florida Gulf Coast waters have been plagued over
4 the last several years with the terrible red tide
5 crisis. The exact cause for this over
6 proliferation, this super bloom, is not firmly
7 established, but mounting evidence shows a very
8 strong correlation to excessive nutrients and
9 wastewater in the extent and the duration of
10 these blooms. In addition, there does not seem
11 to be any remedy for this red tide crisis in the
12 immediate or near future. To allow this permit
13 in the very shallow waters in the location of all
14 these uncertainties around the red tide crisis I
15 believe is grossly wrong and environmentally
16 irresponsible.

17 Mr. Sims and Peters of the Kampachi company
18 had a recent Herald Tribune guest editorial in
19 which they talked about if done responsibly.
20 They referred to a recent collaborative study
21 defining aquaculture as in waters up to 650 deep
22 and excluding areas well used by fishing and
23 recreation. That does not sound like the shallow
24 location for this net pen.

25 They stated that when net pens are sited

1 correctly in deeper waters further offshore that
2 there are no significant impacts in either ocean
3 water quality or the sea foliage below the pen.
4 They also state that they have operated such
5 projects before and well understand the issues
6 and that their own environmental assessments have
7 addressed the risk. Personally, I don't think
8 so. I don't think the company clearly
9 understands our Gulf issues and our risk.

10 According to their website, they conducted
11 two beta trials in Hawaii, one that was a drift
12 method out to 75 feet away from shore, the other
13 that was moored in 6,000 feet of water. However,
14 this net pen location is only 40 to 45 miles
15 offshore of Sarasota in waters that are only
16 130-feet deep. If you do the math, the net pen
17 is moored 40 feet below the water, it's about
18 23-feet deep, that means it's only about 67 feet
19 from the bottom of the water. The red tide
20 blooms originate in waters 10 to 40 miles
21 offshore.

22 This net pen is where the red tide bloom
23 starts. You know, you can't put a toilet bowl in
24 near shallow Gulf waters and be surprised when we
25 have a worsening pollution of red tide problems.

1 Other countries such as Denmark and Canada have
2 moved away from this due to aquatic concerns.

3 This permit should be denied based on the
4 uncertainty of the long-term native impact on our
5 near-shore Gulf ecosystems. I ask the EPA to
6 live up to the title of their agency, protecting
7 the environment.

8 JAN CONNERY: Number 6. We are on number 6.
9 Are you number 7? Is anyone number 8? Oh,
10 you're over there. Oh, good. Okay. No, you're
11 all set there, sir. Sorry, didn't see you.
12 Number 9 this would be a time to come up. Great.
13 Thank you so much.

14 Please go ahead.

15 SEAN PATTON: Hello. My name is Sean Patton.
16 I'm a member of the Science Environment Council
17 of Southwest Florida. I'm also the science
18 director for the Sarasota Environmental Caucus.
19 Tonight I am here representing myself and my
20 company Stocking Savvy Environmental Consulting.

21 We all require jobs, we all eat fish, we all
22 eat seafood, and that is something that I'd like
23 to see is new developments, new agricultures, new
24 aquacultures, and that is something that many
25 people here have already spoken very passionately

1 about tonight. But we also have to realize there
2 are reasons many states are shutting down these
3 fish farms. We are doing aquaculture wrong. We
4 are doing monoculture fish farms that tend to
5 pollute the environment around them, are subject
6 to disease, pests, and generally lowering the
7 water quality.

8 So I am here tonight to suggest a third
9 option, one that Kampachi Farms has actually
10 already done at other sites. It is to take a
11 page out of the agroecology textbook and to grow
12 other organisms along side the Almaco Jack. This
13 could include macroalgae, fisher repeaters, and
14 do sustainable ecosystem-based farming.

15 We already know there's a big drive for
16 seafood in America, know that we already import
17 so much of it, but imagine if we took these warm,
18 salty shallow waters that already grow a large of
19 harmful algae and instead we grow algae that we
20 could eat. Imagine if at the same time we were
21 doing these aquaculture projects and making money
22 and driving our economy we were improving the
23 water quality.

24 So I suggest that Kampachi Farms go back to
25 some of their previous projects in Hawaii where

1 they've actually grown macroalgae, where they
2 have actually done some of these mixed
3 agroecology practices. We like permaculture
4 projects on land. They're good for the
5 environment, you get a wide diversity of food,
6 there's less fertilizer runoff. So why can't we
7 do that here in Sarasota?

8 If we just walk every new project that comes
9 our way we'll never get anywhere. But if this is
10 the first new project in Gulf of Mexico, let's
11 try out a wide variety of methods, let's try out
12 and see if we can actually improve the water
13 quality at the same time we do aquaculture.
14 That's it. All right.

15 JAN CONNERY: Thank you very much, Sean.
16 Okay. Next.

17 MARILYNNE MARTIN: Good evening. My name is
18 Marilynne Martin. I'm from Venice. I drove all
19 the way up here today because I want to be on the
20 record that I oppose this.

21 I think this is a terrible idea and I'm not
22 going to use millions of dollars and hundreds of
23 thousands of lawyers and scientists, I'm just
24 tell you simply. What could go wrong with taking
25 fish where the world was their ocean, putting

1 them in an extremely small contained area,
2 feeding them GMO soy because you can't get soy
3 that's not GMO, and then we're going to get GMO
4 soy little fishy poop that's going to wander
5 around. And if I drop something out far out at
6 sea, eventually it comes in. I don't care what
7 that gentleman said, it eventually comes in.
8 Okay?

9 We are a sick nation, you know, and we should
10 learn from what happened on the land. And I
11 think the EPA should go back to those original
12 20, 30 years ago hearings and I'm sure there was
13 a scientist that said, hey, you know, you want to
14 give a pig 2 feet to live in, okay, that they're
15 going to get sick and you're going to need
16 antibiotics and you going to need chemicals and
17 da-da-da-da, and we know we have a waste problem
18 on land with these confined type of farming.

19 We need to really rethink it. We are
20 chronically ill, our food is nutrient deficient.
21 Okay? And farms are not sufficient. What we
22 need is more fisher boats, okay, and fishermen.
23 And then you get your jobs.

24 And then the final point that I want to make
25 is that I do not believe all of these so-called

1 monitoring. Okay? We had monitoring with the
2 Deep Horizon, whatever, and I remember it being
3 reported about how their emergency plan took good
4 care of the walruses. Okay? And obviously they
5 just copied and paste from the Alaska ones.
6 Okay? So they become meaningless over time.

7 Keep this out of our Gulf. We don't need it.
8 Put it on land. There's an alternative. They
9 can build a pool and grow the Frankenfish. Okay.
10 They can do that. We don't need it in the Gulf
11 and take the risk. Thank you.

12 JAN CONNERY: Number 8. Yeah. And do we
13 have 10 and 11? Oh good. Okay.

14 THOMAS SURPRISE: I'm Tom Surprise. I'm with
15 the Siesta Key Association.

16 I am for our business people getting new
17 sources of income, but on this particular project
18 I'm kind of negative due to the simple fact that
19 I've got four questions which concern thinking
20 beyond tomorrow. There's too many things going
21 on that they go and they do a good project, they
22 make it look good for the first day, and then
23 down the road it becomes horrible more than any
24 other.

25 I would like to know how long Kampachi Fish

1 Farms did their Hawaii project. They talk about
2 a year. It's not enough. I'm talking about
3 looking farther down the road than that.

4 They also have several other projects, I
5 understand, in the U.S. that they said nothing
6 about. What negative came out of these projects?
7 I didn't hear anything about that. I would like
8 to hear about that.

9 I'm thinking that the negative results now
10 down the road can become very bad. I will tell
11 you after I run through my four items why.

12 The second -- first item, or the second item
13 I have is what are they doing to prevent
14 discharge of the elements. I hear they're going
15 to be within the limits. That doesn't mean
16 anything. All that means is, oh, yeah, we'll do
17 it. It doesn't mean anything.

18 I'd like to know what they're going to do
19 because where we get our red tide from is where
20 they're dumping. We're down, we come in from out
21 there, we come in on currents. What's to prevent
22 their discharges to come in on the currents.

23 The third one I have is how many negative
24 things are they putting in here that are not
25 natural to the area. Somebody said something

1 about the fish was natural. I saw two and or
2 three fish and a couple of them I didn't see that
3 were natural to this area.

4 Number 4, that's my last question. What
5 precautions will be taken care of to prevent the
6 negative developments from taking over? We have
7 things like -- a thing called a hurricane comes
8 in now and then. It tears up everything.

9 These things are going to get tore up. They
10 start leaking, they're going to dump stuff that
11 doesn't belong there. Next thing you know, it's
12 come in and we get the red tide.

13 I have two items that -- am I done?

14 JAN CONNERY: Can you wrap up?

15 THOMAS SURPRISE: I have two items very
16 quickly that they were very good ideas to start
17 with when they went out. One of them is kudzu.
18 In the State of Georgia the highway department
19 thought they could put it along side the highways
20 and they wouldn't have to mow highways anymore.
21 It's a vine. It doesn't breed. It went beyond
22 the right of way.

23 JAN CONNERY: Tom, you're going to need to
24 wrap it up.

25 THOMAS SURPRISE: Killed trees and everything

1 else. The other one very quickly is Nutrigrass
2 in New Orleans. They started out as a very good
3 thing and they ended up, I lived there, and they
4 were very, very bad. They caused a lot of
5 problems many times.

6 JAN CONNERY: Great. Thanks so much. You
7 must be number 9?

8 KEN JAROS: I am. Thank you.

9 JAN CONNERY: We have 10, 11, and a good time
10 for 12 to come up on either side, whichever is
11 most convenient.

12 KEN JAROS: Thanks for being here. I'm going
13 to start with a little history and I had a
14 personal experience with this. I'm going to have
15 three questions and I'm going to follow up.

16 JAN CONNERY: Could you give your name and
17 affiliation, please.

18 KEN JAROS: Yes, I will. And then I will
19 follow up with a conclusion.

20 My name is Ken Jaros. J-a-r-o-s. I live in
21 Lee County, Florida, on the water.

22 On July 9, 2018, the Florida governor
23 declared a state of emergency in seven Florida
24 counties to combat the toxic green algal bloom
25 and toxic red tide bloom. At the end of the

1 declared state of emergency, Lee County reported
2 that contractors removing dead sea life from Lee
3 County beaches had amassed more than 4,850,169
4 pounds of sea life and the crews on Sanibel had
5 collected an additional 936,964 pounds. Adding
6 the two numbers together, we get 5,787,133 pounds
7 of dead sea life that washed up on our beaches,
8 including a whale shark, goliath groupers,
9 tarpons, manatees, and turtles. It's unknown how
10 many billions of pounds of sea life perished that
11 didn't wash up on our beaches but floated out to
12 sea or ended up rotting on the bottom.

13 We should be asking the question do we need
14 more pollution from fish food and the waste it
15 becomes? Do we really want to directly discharge
16 toxins like the untreated fish waste and
17 pharmaceuticals into our water for the financial
18 gain of a few individuals? Do we want the whole
19 State of Florida to be a Super Fund Site?

20 It's shocking that we're even here discussing
21 the possibility of issuing a permit to dump
22 untreated waste from the first-ever floating
23 industrial fish factory in the Gulf of Mexico. I
24 believe our health, our water, our economy, and
25 our quality of life are all dependent on strong

1 environmental safeguards. I am strongly opposed
2 to the discharge of industrial wastewater in the
3 Gulf of Mexico. It's time to heal our water and
4 environment. Thank you.

5 JAN CONNERY: Thank you very much. You must
6 be number 11. Or you're 10. Okay. So we've got
7 11 and 12.

8 DEBORAH JAROS: Some people wouldn't say
9 that.

10 JAN CONNERY: 10, 11, 12. If we have number
11 13, good time to come up. You're right there.
12 Okay. Perfect.

13 DEBORAH JAROS: My name is Deborah Jaros, and
14 I live in Cape Coral, Florida. And I want to
15 thank you for allowing me to speak today. I'm
16 here as a Floridian, though I do belong to many
17 groups, but I am strongly opposed to this permit.

18 The Environmental Protection Agency has the
19 duty to protect the environment. To allow this
20 permit by deciding that this facility will not
21 have a significant impact is to disregard this
22 duty and commitment to the people of Florida and
23 to Americans across the U.S.

24 For the past decade many agencies have joined
25 together to help restore and revive the Gulf

1 waters after the devastation caused by Deepwater
2 Horizon. We can all remember the heartbreaking
3 images of shorebirds, turtles, and other marine
4 life covered in oil struggling to survive. More
5 recently, Floridians have been impacted by
6 devastating algal blooms and red tide. The
7 images of literally tons of marine life washed
8 upon Florida shorelines are still fresh in our
9 minds.

10 We do not need another source of pollution to
11 fuel these problems or to create new ones. Any
12 impact is a significant impact. And there will
13 be an impact.

14 I urge you to deny this permit. Do your duty
15 to protect our environment. All life depends on
16 it.

17 JAN CONNERY: Thank you. Do we have number
18 11?

19 JIM MICHAELS: Good evening. Good evening.
20 My name is Jim Michaels. I'm here representing
21 myself and my company.

22 I have been an aquaculture consultant and I
23 own a company called Aquaculture Consulting
24 Services. I've been involved in the
25 aquaculture industry for more than 40 years, and

1 although I'm not involved in any way in this
2 project, I've been watching the development of
3 offshore aquaculture in federal waters, or the
4 lack thereof, for a very long time.

5 It's a generally accepted fact that our
6 oceans are sustainable yields. More fishermen is
7 not going to bring more fish. We're getting what
8 we can out of the oceans.

9 The only solution to supply the global
10 increase demand for seafood is aquaculture.
11 That's just simply a fact. And despite the U.S.
12 being the leading global importer of seafood, it
13 ranks 16th in seafood production on a global
14 basis.

15 As stated before, nearly 90 percent of what
16 we eat is imported and that is creating a \$14
17 billion a year seafood trade deficit. If you
18 layer on the fact that the U.S. per capita
19 seafood consumption continues to increase and
20 over the past three reported years that increase
21 has been another 7 percent, this country has a
22 real seafood problem. Also layer the fact that
23 the U.S. aquaculture production is some of the
24 most highly regulated production in the world.
25 There is no safer seafood than seafood that is

1 produced in the U.S.

2 Responsible offshore aquaculture production
3 can play a significant role in solving this
4 seafood problem. Neil Sims, who has been
5 mentioned, the CEO of Kampachi Farms, has been a
6 leading innovator in offshore aquaculture for
7 more than 15 years. I can't think of anybody
8 more qualified than Neil and Kampachi to do this
9 project.

10 I realize that emotion plays a big role in
11 opposing a project such as this, but the reality
12 is that there's sound published science backing
13 up the fact that a pilot project such as this
14 will have zero long-term impact on the
15 environment and, in fact, the short-term impact
16 parameters will mostly likely be at or below
17 measurable detectable levels.

18 This pilot project is a single pilot project
19 to produce 88,000 pounds of Almaco Jack. As a
20 pilot project, everything associated with this
21 project is going to be scrutinized and measured.
22 Instead of conjecture, we're going to receive
23 facts and data. This project is essential for
24 both the aquaculture industry and for regulators
25 such as yourself. I strongly urge you to issue

1 the NPDES permit so that this project can proceed
2 forward. Thank you.

3 JAN CONNERY: Folks, we're going to hear a
4 variety of comments tonight. Let's maintain an
5 atmosphere of respect, please.

6 You are number 12. And who has 13 and 14 and
7 15? It would be a good time for you to come up.

8 KEVAN MAIN: My name is Kevan Main. I
9 received my Ph.D. in marine ecology from Florida
10 State University, and I'm a past president of the
11 World Aquaculture Society. I'm also the director
12 of aquaculture research for Mote Marine
13 Laboratory.

14 At Mote Marine we have been developing the
15 hatchery technologies to produce Almaco Jacks for
16 the past three years with funding from Florida
17 Sea Grant and from the Gulf State Marine
18 Fisheries Commission. As a result, we have at
19 our zero discharge inland recirculating
20 aquaculture facility, Mote Aquaculture Park,
21 currently we're maintaining a spawning population
22 of wild Almaco Jacks from local Gulf waters.
23 These grants also provide funding for Mote to
24 produce fingerling fish for the Kampachi Farms
25 demonstration project if that project receives

1 the proper permits.

2 I want to make it clear that my comments are
3 not the official statement or position of Mote
4 Marine Laboratory; rather, my comments are based
5 on over 30 years of professional experience in
6 the field of aquaculture and research around the
7 world. I'm here tonight to speak in support of
8 expanding U.S. marine aquaculture production and
9 in support of the Kampachi Fish Farms permit
10 application for the Velella Epsilon project.

11 Time is of the essence in developing U.S.
12 marine aquaculture industry. The U.S. has lagged
13 far behind other countries in developing marine
14 aquaculture, which has created a huge seafood
15 trade deficit. \$14 billion second only to the
16 import of oil.

17 In addition, we have over 91 percent of the
18 seafood that we eat here in Florida and in the
19 United States is imported and half of that is
20 farmed. Worldwide, finfish is the lowest cost
21 protein and a growing seafood supply gap
22 disproportionately affects the nutrition and
23 health of the poor. An analysis conducted in
24 2006 by an international team of ecologists and
25 economists published in the Journals of Science

1 showed that -- predicted the possibility of
2 collapse of all seafood species by 2048. This is
3 happening at the same time that the U.S. medical
4 community is calling for us to eat more
5 high-quality seafood products, especially those
6 are that are high in omega 3 fatty acids, which
7 are plentiful in marine fish.

8 The U.S. needs to take a balanced approach to
9 dealing with our seafood supply dilemma. Many of
10 the criticisms of aquaculture are based on
11 outdated practices that were abandoned years ago
12 as people learned how to do farming better.
13 There are best management practices that have
14 been developed and scientists and fish farmers
15 are working with those technologies. There are
16 also many peer-reviewed scientific publications
17 supporting the development of marine aquaculture
18 to produce high-quality protein to feed the
19 world's growing fish population.

20 The Kampachi Farms demonstration project is a
21 vital first step in providing the needed data to
22 develop the development of sustainable offshore
23 aquaculture. It's a demonstration to develop
24 data. So with that I would like to say that we
25 need to do this in a manner that is both

1 environmentally sustainable and provides the
2 information that we need.

3 Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

4 JAN CONNERY: Thank you.

5 KAFI BENZ: Initially I'd like to say that I
6 do have a much more extensive contribution and
7 I've submitted it in writing and it will be
8 available.

9 JAN CONNERY: Could you give us your name.

10 KAFI BENZ: Yeah. We consulted a good number
11 of scientists and researched a lot. Information
12 will be attached.

13 My name is Kafi Benz, and I'm president of
14 the Sarasota County Council of Neighborhood
15 Associations.

16 Scientific speculation generally agrees that
17 it is unlikely for the proposed pilot project to
18 yield negative results because of its size.
19 Small scale. That small scale also makes it
20 unlikely for the proposed pilot project to be
21 able to provide scientific data that could
22 justify the initiation of commercial finfish
23 farming in federal waters above the shallow shelf
24 along the western coast of Florida.

25 The proposal has been drafted to include some

1 admirable parameters, such as the species chosen,
2 recognition of the important factors regarding
3 aquaculture and our needs for it, but our
4 research regarding the proposed pilot project has
5 led us to the conclusion that this current
6 proposal is inappropriate for the site. We have
7 suggestions that we will make regarding
8 aquaculture, potentially even in the Gulf of
9 Mexico, afterward.

10 The proposed pilot project will not
11 contribute any data that could justify a decision
12 for permitting commercial finfish farming along
13 the western coast of Florida. Essentially, it
14 seems a waste of resources and finances to
15 proceed with the proposed project and it could
16 exacerbate existing conditions.

17 The location of this proposed project is
18 documented as an epicenter of nascent algal bloom
19 incubation and it has been identified as the
20 location of red tide factors that readily may be
21 fed to bloom with the introduction of more
22 nutrients in what already is a delicate balance.
23 It may flare up quickly in great volume and wreak
24 havoc on our environment and our health.

25 The currents in the Gulf are weak, unlike

1 those that can be found away from the continental
2 shelf in deep water. Even with our weak
3 currents, a single pen may yield no significant
4 increase in nutrients because of the dilution,
5 but a single pen could never be a commercial
6 success and a commercial project would have to
7 include many pens that quickly would exceed the
8 threshold of dilution. Furthermore, feeding an
9 artificial and stationary population of finfish
10 in that location may attract the *Karenia brevis*
11 red tide algae. They can swim, you know. Two
12 sources.

13 I'm running out of time.

14 Our existing hard bottom is very important to
15 the Gulf of Mexico and it supports a good number
16 of species that we use for recreational and
17 commercial fishing. That needs to be protected.
18 Even in a storm they cannot get this pen lower
19 than a certain dimension on our shallow shelf and
20 our storm period extends six months into this
21 one-year project. It just doesn't work out well.

22 Please look at my notes that will be attached
23 electronically to this. Thank you.

24 JAN CONNERY: Thank you very much. Number
25 14. 14 over there. You're 15. And 16, do we

1 have 16? Be a good time to come up. Thank you.
2 Please go ahead.

3 JUSTIN BLOOM: Hi. My name is Justin Bloom.
4 I'm with Suncoast Waterkeeper, a Sarasota based
5 nonprofit environmental organization with members
6 and supporters throughout Southwest Florida.

7 We do not subscribe to a fundamental
8 objection to offshore aquaculture. We recognize
9 the need for reliable sources of healthy seafood
10 and see the potential for such facilities to
11 compliment traditional commercial fishing
12 communities with minimal environmental impacts.
13 However, we object to the issuance of this permit
14 as drafted given the inadequate public awareness
15 and review, the failure to comply with required
16 regulatory reviews and consultations, and, most
17 importantly, the risk of cumulative environmental
18 harm from this and the larger projects that are
19 likely to follow.

20 It's our position that federal law calls for
21 more thorough review and analysis in the form of
22 a full environmental impact study of the
23 potential environmental and socioeconomic impacts
24 from the project and any alternatives available
25 to the applicant. EPA reviewed the abbreviated

1 Environmental Assessment and made an
2 inappropriate and, arguably, illegal
3 determination that the project would have no
4 significant impact and did not trigger a full EIS
5 review. Key to that determination was their
6 failure to look at the reasonably foreseeable
7 expansion of the current proposal beyond its
8 pilot stage.

9 The law requires and we demand a cumulative
10 impact analysis of potential impacts from the
11 likely proliferation of fish farms on our coasts.
12 That is the key to our opposition.

13 While this pilot project raises numerous
14 issues, our significant concern has to do with
15 improperly regulated growth of an industry that
16 is fraught with risk. Individual NPDES permit
17 reviews will not adequately protect us from
18 potential impacts of a commercial fish farm
19 industry off our coast. There is no adequate
20 regulatory regime in place to deal with the
21 expansion of offshore aquaculture in federal
22 waters.

23 NOAA attempted to regulate offshore finfish
24 aquaculture while being tasked at the same time
25 with promoting the same industry. The courts

1 found that NOAA lacked the authority to do so.
2 While the regulatory regime is unsettled pending
3 appellate review and further legislation, the
4 industry and its partners are trying to sidestep
5 comprehensive regulation via an abbreviated NPDES
6 review.

7 NPDES permits have been a colossal failure in
8 Florida. There are inadequate permit
9 requirements, there has been practically no
10 enforcement, and the result has been a nightmare
11 of urban, agricultural, and industrial pollution.
12 We're seeing the impacts of that now with
13 declining water quality, reduction of sea grasses
14 and horrific algae blooms.

15 Considering the potential environmental
16 impacts and the regulatory uncertainties
17 surrounding offshore finfish aquaculture in the
18 Gulf, we're asking the EPA to take a step back,
19 deny this permit, and asking our regulatory
20 agencies together to take a hard look at whether
21 this type of industrial aquaculture is
22 appropriate for the Gulf coast.

23 JAN CONNERY: Thank you.

24 RONALD KASHDEN: I'll just hold the mic. Can
25 you hear me? Great.

1 Ron Kashden, homeowner of the City of
2 Sarasota.

3 The effect of the proposed fishery on the
4 growth and perpetuation of red tide is a concern
5 shared by everyone in this hearing. It was a
6 concern for the EPA and such a concern that they
7 devoted a section of its discussion in their
8 ocean discharge criteria evaluation, which is
9 Section 9.2.5, page 36.

10 In that discussion the EPA stated that the
11 expected materials and chemicals that would
12 normally be released through this fish farm
13 normally feed harmful algae group of blooms in
14 the nitrogen-limited waters of the Gulf.
15 However, it goes on to state that there is no
16 scientific evidence that suggests a causality
17 between the fisheries and red tide. And the way
18 they cite that is they go back to the
19 world-renowned algae expert, Professor Graham
20 Harris, and the work he did in 1984.

21 Well, we reached out to Professor Harris
22 because we thought that that sounded like
23 antiquated studies. Well, Professor Harris got
24 back to us. He was, one, surprised that such
25 outdated studies were still being referenced.

1 He then went on to state that there was
2 extensive research that proves just the opposite.
3 He went on to state that nitrogen additions are
4 the main cause of prolonged algae blooms. So the
5 EPA's own cited expert comes back and says that
6 fisheries are linked to harmful algae blooms.

7 So, with that, with the EPA's own expert in
8 there and that we know that there are expected
9 algae blooms, let's talk about red tide and what
10 the impact is to the community. For the moment,
11 let's forget about the asthma and the other
12 health concerns that occurs. Let's also forget
13 about the quarantined beaches. And, for the
14 moment, let's also forget about our own
15 restrictive lives.

16 Since this is a proposal for a business,
17 let's talk in pure economic terms. The Tampa Bay
18 Regional Planning Council used data from the
19 State of Florida to determine the economic impact
20 for the last bad red tide bloom which occurred in
21 2018. So the Council came back and concluded
22 that Florida sustained \$96.4 million in damages
23 to the local economy.

24 So if you look at this proposal in purely
25 business economic terms, Kampachi would need to

1 have a yearly profit of -- almost done -- of
2 \$96.4 million in order to break even from the
3 damage that's going to be caused by red tide.
4 Thank you.

5 JAN CONNERY: Number 16; right?

6 GLENN COMPTON: Number 16.

7 JAN CONNERY: 16. Good time for number 19 to
8 come up if you would like to do that.

9 GLENN COMPTON: My name is Glenn Compton.
10 I'm here on behalf of ManaSota-88. We're a
11 not-for-profit public health environmental
12 organization in Manatee and Sarasota County.

13 We've submitted extensive comments on this.
14 I don't want to go over all of them, that's for
15 sure. I'm only going to focus on one.

16 One of our main concerns is that this is only
17 an Environmental Assessment that is being done
18 for this project. This is of the magnitude that
19 it should be hooked up to an environmental impact
20 study. At this point, and probably in the future
21 if ever one was to be done, we are recommending
22 denial of the Environmental Assessment.

23 One of our main concerns is water quality
24 monitoring. And typically with an NPDES permit
25 you have specific outfalls where you can monitor

1 the discharge offsite on a regular basis and on a
2 consistent basis, if necessary.

3 This is an open water discharge. So whether
4 or not you're going to be able to pick up the
5 problem is more going to be associated with which
6 way the wind blows and which way the current is
7 going to flow. And that's not adequate.
8 Especially with this being the first of possibly
9 many projects that are going to be proposed in
10 the Gulf of Mexico.

11 As far as red tide goes, the statement has
12 been made that this probably will not contribute
13 to the red tide problem that we have in the Gulf
14 of Mexico, but, conversely, you can't say that it
15 won't. So our recommendation at this point is to
16 have EPA err on the side of caution, recommend
17 that this be denied as environmentally
18 unsatisfactory, make that recommendation to the
19 Army Corps of Engineers with the hope that they
20 will have the same recommendation. And as far as
21 this goes, not here, not ever.

22 JAN CONNERY: Thank you. Thank you. Number
23 17. Yes. And we have 18, 19, and 20, are you --
24 can you come up. Be right there. Okay. Thank
25 you.

1 DENNIS PETERS: Good evening. My name is
2 Dennis Peters, and I am the project manager and
3 permit coordinator for the Velella Epsilon
4 project and team Kampachi.

5 And I would like to thank many of the
6 proponents and opponents for this project that
7 already quoted accurately from Mr. Sims earlier
8 tonight. You will hear some of the statements
9 again from his work.

10 As a seasoned oceanographer, fisheries
11 biologist, and recreational fisherman, my
12 experience spans across the marine species
13 propagation, conservation, and protection in the
14 Gulf of Mexico.

15 To summarize the project before us tonight,
16 the Velella Epsilon will validate the feasibility
17 of the single, temporary small-scale
18 demonstration net pen to conduct comprehensive
19 environmental monitoring of water quality,
20 benthic analysis per EPA and core requirements
21 while addressing public concerns of offshore
22 open-ocean aquaculture in the Gulf by encouraging
23 public and tourists to visit the demonstration
24 site for themselves.

25 In preparation of this project, countless

1 hours of formal and informal discussions have
2 been devoted toward the coordination and
3 collaboration with representatives of multiple
4 federal and state agencies as well as with
5 commercial and recreational fisheries and other
6 user groups of the ocean.

7 This extensive coordination allowed us to
8 perform a comprehensive site analysis that
9 originally considered 18 initial sites across the
10 Sarasota area that led to the final selection of
11 one site to target the appropriate water depth,
12 currents, substrate, and temperature regimes
13 while avoiding sensitive marine habitats and
14 benthic species and de-conflicting the activities
15 with other user groups of the Gulf of Mexico.

16 Although offshore aquaculture in federal
17 waters is a new industry to the Gulf of Mexico,
18 there is already plenty of sound science that
19 shows when net pens are sited correctly in deeper
20 water further offshore and when these systems are
21 managed according to well-established practices,
22 there are no significant impacts on the water
23 quality, sea floor habitats, or on the wild fish
24 or other wildlife around the net pens.

25 Our team has operated similar offshore

1 projects before and we understand the issues.
2 Our comprehensive Environmental Assessment has
3 addressed these concerns.

4 We are only using local wild native-caught
5 brood stock from the Sarasota region to produce
6 the fingerlings, as you heard earlier tonight
7 from Mote. We are going to use a robust net pen
8 system designed to minimize the risk of escapes
9 and marine mammal entanglement. We will use
10 high-quality pelleted diet that optimizes fish
11 health and produces a superb sashimi-grade
12 product while minimizing the use of fishmeal and
13 fish oil.

14 The Velella Epsilon project is just one
15 temporary demonstration project, but it also
16 serves as an opportunity for us to share with all
17 users of the Gulf of Mexico and for them to see
18 for themselves that such operations can safely
19 produce much needed quality seafood with minimal
20 environmental effects and broad benefits the
21 local and global environment.

22 Our team is committed to complying with all
23 the federal and state local requirements while
24 continuing close coordination with the agencies
25 and Gulf of Mexico stakeholders. Our team also

1 recognizes that we have but one opportunity to
2 get it right the first time while doing no harm
3 to the environment, yet serving as an example in
4 the highest standard for others to follow. Thank
5 you.

6 JAN CONNERY: Thank you very much. I believe
7 we're up to number 18 at this point. Number 18?

8 SANDY GILBERT: I'm here.

9 JAN CONNERY: And number 21, be a good time
10 to come up if you'd like, to the side.

11 SANDY GILBERT: Good evening, everyone. I'm
12 Sandy Gilbert. I'm the chairman and CEO of
13 START, Solutions To Avoid Red Tide.

14 We generally favor aquaculture. We think
15 it's needed. When we say that we mean closed-in
16 aquaculture and viable aquaculture and, as a
17 result, we're for that. And we're definitely
18 against this project. There are four reasons
19 why.

20 We already have too many excess nutrients in
21 our waterways. We don't want more. You've seen
22 signs. Stronger and longer lasting red tides,
23 more frequent algal blooms of other kinds that
24 I've been here 20 years and we haven't seen
25 before.

1 Decline in sea grass. We already have a
2 nutrient impaired parts of our very lower surface
3 of the bay right now before this comes.

4 Number 2, the project is counterproductive to
5 the State's work dealing with the Lake Okeechobee
6 releases and our own local government's working
7 hard to reduce the nutrients of the waterway.
8 It's contradictory to what we're trying to do.

9 Number 3, it's been said by others, it's
10 located in the exact wrong place. Right where
11 red tide starts. Wrong place.

12 And last, I don't like the arguments I've
13 heard from the folks supporting this, the people
14 from Kampachi Farms. First of all, huge
15 studies -- this is a quote -- report ecological
16 effects. There will be ecological effects.

17 Nutrients from the pen help support existing
18 wildlife stock. Not really. Nutrients from the
19 pen will only be effective for, quote, 90 meters
20 in the ocean. Have you heard of the current that
21 brings everything to our shores? Definitely
22 incorrect.

23 And we also know it's incorrect because of
24 what they said in their newspaper report this
25 morning, that they're so excited that every

1 morning in Hawaii 30 fishing boats are lined up
2 outside the pens to fish the wild stock. And
3 they note, that includes tuna and Marlin. Those
4 two species are gone in the Gulf of Mexico right
5 now by about 80 percent.

6 This is just a fishing station for wild
7 stock. And in case you think that's just
8 intuitive on my part, there are three research
9 studies that prove when you have a pen your wild
10 stock outside it will decline.

11 So the nutrients are bad, we don't want it.
12 Stop this thing. Listen to the people and do the
13 right kind of aquaculture. Closed-in. This
14 isn't it.

15 JAN CONNERY: Thank you. Number 19. And if
16 you're number 22, it's a good time to come up on
17 either side.

18 RUSTY CHINNIS: My name is Rusty Chinnis. I
19 do not have a prepared statement. I came here
20 tonight to listen. I certainly have an opinion
21 and you will find out about that.

22 I have been in the area since 1981. I'm a
23 fisherman. And because I'm a fisherman and
24 because I care about the waters, I've been
25 involved over the years with a number of

1 organizations who are working hard to try to
2 preserve our environment and our fisheries, water
3 quality and habitat. That includes the Florida
4 Conservation Association that is now the Coastal
5 Conservation Association, also a group called the
6 Sister Keys Conservancy that formed back in the
7 late '80s in order to protect some islands in
8 Sarasota Bay.

9 Then I became concerned after all the red
10 tide events that we have and with myself and some
11 others we formed an organization in 2007 called
12 Sarasota Bay Watch. But I want to make it clear
13 that I'm here tonight to speak on my own behalf
14 and not for any organization in particular.

15 But it just seems like a lot of people have
16 expressed the same feelings that I have tonight
17 that I'm not against aquaculture, I think it's
18 something that we definitely need. I just think
19 that the method and the siting is all wrong with
20 the red tide problems that we've had, with the
21 nutrient loading from infrastructure, it just
22 seems like this off the coast of Sarasota in this
23 shallow water is possibly the worst possible
24 location and not the best.

25 So I encourage the EPA to deny this permit or

1 to alter it so it could be done right. I agree a
2 land-based aquaculture system has so much more
3 potential. Thank you.

4 JAN CONNERY: Thank you. We have a 21. I
5 invite whoever has 23 to come on up to the side.

6 RALEIGH HOKE: Hello. My name is Raleigh
7 Hoke. I'm with Healthy Gulf, an environmental
8 nonprofit focused on hire people to protect and
9 restore the natural resources of the Gulf of
10 Mexico region.

11 We strongly oppose EPA's issuance of this
12 pollutant discharge permit for this proposed
13 offshore fish farm because of the impacts that it
14 will have on the Gulf of Mexico's environment and
15 the people who rely on a healthy Gulf.

16 In recent years, Florida's Gulf Coast has
17 experienced serious red tide and blue-green algae
18 blooms that have had far-reaching impacts on our
19 coastal economies, people's health, and wildlife.
20 These events are in part driven by the nitrogen
21 and phosphorous pollution and permitting this
22 facility will only add more of that pollution to
23 our waters. We should be fighting to clean up
24 our waters, not adding more pollution.

25 The Gulf Coast's economy and culture are

1 infinitely connected to healthy waters and
2 beaches and vibrant recreational and commercial
3 fisheries that supply residents and visitors with
4 great seafood. These industries are already
5 facing serious challenges from pollution, natural
6 disasters, and foreign competition. Factory fish
7 farms make it more difficult for our hard
8 working, small-boat fishermen to make a living
9 while increasing corporate control over our
10 seafood production.

11 The public is left with more questions than
12 answers because the EPA has yet to explore the
13 full implications of this proposed project by
14 requiring an Environmental Impact Statement.

15 For all these reasons and more, EPA should
16 stop Kampachi from using our region as a test
17 tube for the first ever Gulf federal water
18 offshore facility. Thank you.

19 JAN CONNERY: Thank you very much. If you're
20 24, please come to the site.

21 BRUCE WOJCIK: Hello. Thank you for the
22 opportunity to speak here tonight.

23 My name is Bruce Wojcik. I'm a retired
24 wildlife biologist and ecologist, spent a major
25 part of my career working with wetlands and

1 aquatic issues. And very familiar with the
2 permit systems and even more familiar with how
3 people get around them. And I'm not pointing an
4 accusatory finger at any new company, but I'm
5 just telling you that it does happen. Not only
6 does that happen, accidents happen.

7 And I'm not going to -- I don't want to get
8 into should we do aquaculture or not. For me,
9 no. If I don't shoot it or catch it on the end
10 of a line, I don't eat it. I don't want the man
11 processing my food. So I do my own food
12 procurement. But I do realize that aquaculture
13 is important, but not here.

14 I spend an awful lot of time out on the
15 water. Anybody here that spends more time on the
16 water than me, I don't know how you're still
17 married or have any friends because I am on the
18 water constantly and mainly back country fishing.
19 I live in Charlotte County and I fish all around
20 Sanibel and Captiva and all throughout Charlotte
21 Harbor. And if you do that and you do it three,
22 four, five days a week, you know what red tide
23 has done, you know the damage that's going on
24 still.

25 And if you happen to subscribe to the FWC

1 website and you get the weekly, twice weekly
2 report on red tide, you can go from Collier up to
3 Pasco County and you never, never see anywhere
4 that it doesn't have at least background
5 concentration of the red tide. Background
6 concentration of the red tide may be normal, but
7 you don't want it to get any stronger than that
8 and it will with more nutrients. It's not worth
9 the risk to put that extra nutrient load out
10 there.

11 Read your little handout. It says the
12 permittee will develop BMPs. The fox guarding
13 the henhouse? I'm going to write the best
14 management practices that's going to close my
15 business down?

16 There are way too many grey areas in this
17 permit process. As a scientist, I oppose it; as
18 a sportsman, I oppose it; as a human being living
19 in this country on this planet, I oppose it.
20 Thank you.

21 JAN CONNERY: Thank you. If you are number
22 25. You're 25?

23 ROBERT IVERSON: 24.

24 JAN CONNERY: We're at 23. That's all right.
25 I'm glad we have a cue and I'm glad we have folks

1 waiting. You're doing really well.

2 TYLER VADEN. Hi. My name is Tyler Vaden,
3 and I'm a Sarasota homeowner.

4 The Gulf of Mexico is at a breaking point.
5 You don't have to look far back in the history
6 books to recognize that. The Deepwater Horizons
7 still, the red tide bloom, the ever-expanding
8 dead zone. This water is tired and yet we
9 continued to exploit it in the name of profit and
10 consumption.

11 At what point do we realize that we are
12 harming the ocean that we depend on. We need to
13 appreciate the Gulf and start taking better care
14 of it before it's too late. The EPA entertaining
15 a company that isn't even from here to exploit
16 our waters for their own financial gain is
17 insulting.

18 It's inevitable that significant runoff will
19 be created from this farm considering that a
20 discharge permit is required. Antibiotics and
21 nitrogen will be effectively dumped into a
22 location that is already proven it cannot handle
23 it.

24 By allowing this offshore farm to run, we
25 will be paving the way for more to be built.

1 While one farm may not have significant impact,
2 would ten? There needs to be more regulatory
3 standards and studies on how this would affect
4 the health of the ocean before it is
5 green-lighted.

6 As a father to a little girl, I worry about
7 the health of our oceans and I am fearful of what
8 it will look like when she is my age.

9 Overdevelopment, exploitation of the land, dated
10 sewage systems and other sources of runoff
11 already plague our state. It's disheartening
12 enough to see what companies like Mosaic and the
13 U.S. Sugar Corporation are getting away with.
14 Are we really going to entertain bringing in
15 another company -- (Interruption by audience
16 applause.)

17 We should be directing our time and energy
18 towards solutions that protect the water instead
19 of looking for ways to profit off of it. It's
20 time we stand up for an ocean that can't stand up
21 for itself. There is very little to gain and
22 much to lose by allowing this proposal to go
23 through. Let's shut this horrific idea down.
24 Florida has been through enough.

25 JAN CONNERY: Does anyone have number 22?

1 Okay. Well, then we'll do 24. He was 23.

2 ROBERT IVERSON: 24. My name is Robert
3 Iverson. I'm a 20-year resident of Florida,
4 retired physician.

5 First I have to say that I'm not an
6 eco-fanatic. I eat farmed Salmon, farmed
7 catfish, and tilapia. It's delicious. It's
8 reasonably priced and it's widely available.
9 When I can afford it, I even buy Mote Marine's
10 farmed sturgeon caviar, and that's not very
11 often.

12 However, I have to admit the fish farms are
13 here to stay. Expansion of aquaculture industry
14 I believe is good when properly managed and
15 regulated, but please note the proposed Kampachi
16 Fish Farm in the waters west of Sarasota will
17 break the existing ban on fish farming in Gulf
18 coastal waters. I wonder why it been banned up
19 to now. Well, that's a rhetorical question.

20 But I think there's a notable lack of
21 information about the harms of just such a
22 project. It's being proposed as a pilot project.
23 But I carefully reviewed the NPDES. I got lost
24 in a lot of acronyms. All the supporting
25 documents, over 500 pages, I read them word by

1 word. And it turns out, remember your biology
2 doing experiments, this is the definition of a
3 biological experiment. The outcome is unknown.

4 The design of this experiment contains a
5 plethora of data pertaining to potential
6 environmental risks and within the experiment the
7 outcomes are unknown.

8 Just a brief passing comment. Since I'm a
9 physician I'm, of course, concerned about
10 dropping antibiotics into the ocean. The
11 application I think, the summary application,
12 indicated that Kampachi would not initially plan
13 to use antibiotics, that if used they would be
14 used in limited quantities. Well, that's
15 reassuring. Meanwhile, we're being told we
16 shouldn't flush our old unused antibiotics down
17 the toilet because it all flows into the Gulf and
18 disrupts the ecosystem. Go figure.

19 All right. On to my main point. One of the
20 most important outcomes, this has been mentioned
21 before, is the red tide risk. To get just a bit
22 scientific, you've already heard that the growth
23 of the organism requires nitrogen and
24 phosphorous, the same ingredients in fertilizer
25 and in fish food.

1 I have to -- is my time growing short?

2 JAN CONNERY: Half a minute.

3 ROBERT IVERSON: Then I'll go quickly.

4 About 30 percent of the fish food that's
5 dropped into this net will be kept by the fish.
6 70 percent of it will be excreted in terms of in
7 form of fish feces. And then there's a lot of
8 the pellets that don't get eaten and go right
9 down to the bottom. This all then contributes to
10 the nitrogen and the phosphorous for our red tide
11 organisms to proliferate with.

12 So we can't forget the impact of the red
13 tide, the smell, the stench, the economic impact,
14 of dead fish kill. Who would want to participate
15 in this experiment?

16 The standards are not there. The
17 measurements of the limit for the measurements
18 for nitrogen and phosphorous don't exist in the
19 EPA's guidelines because this is new, this is
20 unprecedented territory, it's an experiment.
21 There's no guidelines, there's no rules to break,
22 this is just an experiment and we should not go
23 there.

24 JAN CONNERY: Thank you. We're up to 25
25 right now. If you are 28, please come up to

1 either side.

2 BILL MATTURRO: My name is Bill Maturro.
3 I'm speaking on behalf of the Wildlife Law Center
4 from the national organization Friends of
5 Animals.

6 The EPA should deny this permit application
7 for the simple reason that there currently is no
8 statutory authority for permitting and developing
9 aquaculture in federal waters, in waters that
10 remain the property of the people of the United
11 States. The Keep Finfish Free Act of 2019, which
12 is House Bill 2467, would prohibit the issuance
13 of permits by any agency to conduct finfish
14 aquaculture until a law is enacted that allows
15 such action.

16 EPA should accede to congressional authority
17 and postpone any permitting until it is given the
18 specific legal right to lease public waters to
19 private interests. Thank you.

20 JAN CONNERY: Thank you. 26. And if you're
21 29, it's a good time to come up.

22 ROBERT WEISBERG: Good evening. My name is
23 Robert Weisberg. My professional title is
24 Distinguished University Professor and I'm a
25 professor of physical oceanography in the College

1 of Marine Science at USF.

2 What's really fascinating tonight is the
3 different approaches that everybody is taking to
4 this issue and I will give you yet another one.

5 I'm not here to advocate for or against the
6 Kampachi Fish Farm. Instead, I am here to state
7 that the documents provided, totaling some 500
8 pages, each with EPA, USACE, and other
9 informants are useless for providing assurances
10 that problems will not arise. Why? Because the
11 ocean circulation determines the water properties
12 in which the Kampachi Fish Farm will reside and
13 the transfer of materials that may issue from it.
14 Yet, the ocean circulation is either ignored or
15 misrepresented in the documents.

16 Despite well-developed literature on the West
17 Florida continental shelf circulation and its
18 role in shelf ecology, the cited literature dates
19 back to the 1970s when very little was known.
20 Similarly, while a large data set now exists,
21 only a snippet was presented and in a very
22 misleading manner even without proper
23 attribution. I mean, the reports were just
24 sloppy. Thus, while the Environmental Assessment
25 draft covers a lot of material, it fails to cover

1 what is important.

2 So what may be said of importance this
3 evening. Under certain not uncommon conditions,
4 materials issuing from the proposed fish farm can
5 arrive on Captiva-Sanibel beaches within only a
6 few days. You would never know that from reading
7 the report. This was determined by tracking
8 particles using a simulation and I will show you
9 an example in a minute.

10 I will add that this near-bottom transfer
11 pathway that I will show is the same way that the
12 region receives its red tide in most years and is
13 also why gag grouper juveniles tend to be so
14 abundant between Tampa Bay and Charlotte Harbor.
15 Given more time, I could provide a whole series
16 of such simulations, but I'll have to stop with
17 just a couple.

18 So you probably can't see this, but so
19 there's the Kampachi site and within four days
20 materials, under typical conditions, can arrive
21 at Captiva and Sanibel. And the simulation was
22 done for 2010. On the top you're seeing
23 simulations made every month in that year. And
24 so not only can they go to Captiva and Sanibel,
25 they could also go to the Dry Tortugas around the

1 Keys also in a matter of days.

2 And so we've heard a lot of experts talk
3 about what's in the report. The report is
4 missing some really fundamental information and
5 on the basis of that report we should not be
6 granting any permit. Thank you.

7 JAN CONNERY: Robert, we have a book of the
8 public commenters, if you will submit those.

9 So we are up to number 27.

10 We have two baskets just as a reminder, where
11 you can leave a comment. And of course you can
12 submit them, as Jeaneanne said earlier, after the
13 meeting up through February 4th.

14 Please go ahead.

15 BROOKE ERRETT: Hello. My name is Brooke
16 Errett. I'm a Florida organizer with Food &
17 Water Watch and Food & Water Action, representing
18 over 60,000 supporters here in Florida. We're
19 here in opposition to the proposed permit.

20 Factory fish farming is big, dirty, and
21 dangerous and like the factory farming that we
22 see here on land. These farms are merely a
23 result of attempts to produce fish as cheaply as
24 possible. Allowing ocean fish farming in our
25 waters grants private companies the right to

1 exploit our public resources for their own
2 financial benefit.

3 This is bad for our ecosystem. Uneaten fish
4 feed, fish waste, and any antibiotics or
5 chemicals used in fish farm operations flow from
6 the cages directly into the ocean and this can
7 significantly harm the ocean environment. Caged
8 fish escape and then they compete for resources
9 or interbreed with wild fish and weaken important
10 genetic traits.

11 Farmed fish also spread disease to wild fish.
12 And especially in Florida these escapes are a
13 given due to complications like severe weather,
14 sharks and other predators, equipment failure,
15 and human error. Fish escapes jeopardize the
16 recovery of depleted or endangered species that
17 we're already seeing here in the state and lead
18 to the spread of diseases, breeding with the wild
19 populations, and causing the disruption of
20 natural ecosystems.

21 As someone else said, it's also bad for our
22 economy. Factory fish farms interfere with the
23 livelihoods of commercial and recreational
24 fisherman by displacing them from traditional
25 fishing grounds and harming the wild fish

1 population. It then floods the market with cheap
2 farmed fish and drives down prices for our wild
3 fish, putting fisherman out of business and
4 fishing communities in peril.

5 Another economic concern is to our tourism
6 industry as there's a decreased opportunity for
7 recreational fishing as fish and water become
8 polluted by nearby factory farms.

9 And it's bad for our health. Fish produced
10 at factory fish farms have higher levels of
11 contaminants than wild fish and they lead to
12 health risks for consumers. The use of
13 antibiotics on fish farms can cause
14 drug-resistant bacteria to develop, which is then
15 passed on to humans.

16 But most importantly, it's not necessary.
17 Unfortunately, even though people have become
18 increasingly cautious about the environmental
19 cultural and economic repercussions of their
20 seafood choices, the U.S. government continues to
21 push for the development of open-ocean
22 aquaculture. The federal government has already
23 spent millions to promote this troubled industry
24 despite overwhelming poor results.

25 The U.S. right now exports about 70 percent

1 of the fish we catch and then imports cheaper,
2 lower quality seafood products for U.S.
3 Consumption. Just because we keep producing more
4 fish here doesn't mean those products would be
5 eaten here or that we would import less fish. It
6 is absolutely unnecessary and we ask you to deny
7 this permit. Thank you.

8 JAN CONNERY: Thank you very much. We're at
9 28. 28 now. And if you have 30 or 31, I invite
10 you to come up on either side at this point.

11 DR. NEAL SCHLEIFER: Hello. I'm Dr. Neal
12 Schleifer. I'm president of Paradise Cove
13 Association on Siesta and over 40-year resident.
14 We oppose the granting of the pollutant discharge
15 permit to Kampachi Farm.

16 The beaches, marine life, and ecosystem are
17 why many of us chose to live here. They also
18 fuel the local economy and tourism, the area's
19 largest business.

20 All agree the fish farm will release
21 untreated feces, antibiotics, and excess feed
22 into the Gulf. This will increase ammonia
23 nitrogen and decrease oxygen. This cannot be
24 good for the health of the Gulf and natural
25 species.

1 We're told the amount of the discharge will
2 not be enough to create major problems. There
3 are several fallacies for that reasoning. First,
4 the Gulf ecosystem is much more fragile than
5 previously thought. Red tide blooms have been
6 much more frequent, intense than expected and may
7 be affected by fish farm discharge. Algae blooms
8 causing massive fish kills have increased in
9 other countries that have fish farms, including
10 Norway, Iceland, and others.

11 The public has been told not to worry and
12 environmentalists dismissed as alarmists, but our
13 concerns are too often proven valid. There are
14 too many risks to ignore. No-swim advisories
15 have been increasing at an alarming rate.
16 Nokomis and North Jetty Beaches December 23rd to
17 25th, Blind Pass Beach in August, three other
18 Sarasota beaches on July 4th, all prime time for
19 locals and tourists.

20 Fish farms bring diseases to native fish.
21 Contaminating the waters from two different
22 antibiotics and other harmful chemicals won't
23 stop the problem. It hasn't elsewhere.

24 Pens fail and release farm fish which compete
25 with native fish. Whenever that happens, the

1 native fish population declines.

2 We're told that one farm will not impact us
3 seriously, but no one knows for sure. Don't risk
4 our life and livelihoods -- or quality of our
5 life and livelihood on speculation.

6 Most importantly, it has been widely reported
7 that this farm is only a test case. The
8 proponents of ocean fish farms want this to be
9 the precedent that opens the door to
10 industrializing our waters. A number of farms
11 are proposed for the Gulf alone already and that
12 will surely lead to disaster. But, remember,
13 even one farm has the potential for calamity.

14 Imagine a red tide outbreak with 20,000 fish
15 in the pen. How would that affect the Gulf?

16 It's easy to say the cage will be lowered in
17 a hurricane, but a pen with 20,000 fish and a
18 category three, four, or five hurricane.

19 Automation only needs more to go wrong. Anyone
20 with experience knows how corrosive salt waters
21 are. Imagine the potential catastrophe if a pen
22 opens, breaks loose, or hits bottom.

23 There are too many dangers and unknowns
24 because of the prevalence of red tide and
25 hurricanes in Sarasota. We urge the EPA, don't

1 approve this contract, don't be remembered as the
2 ones who opened the door to our greatest coastal
3 and economic disaster. Don't make our home and
4 ecosystem a test specimen for an unproven
5 industry's gamble for profit.

6 JAN CONNERY: Thank you. 29. 29. And if
7 you are 31 and 32, please come up on the sides.

8 STEWART DAVID: My name is Stewart David.
9 I'm a full-time resident of Venice.

10 I feel like this is a bit of a scam perhaps
11 because what could possibly be learned from this
12 small test project. At this scale, it is
13 unlikely that pollution will do enough damage to
14 significantly harm the ecosystem, yet we know
15 that factory farming of fish has repeatedly been
16 shown to be an environmental nightmare. If
17 larger projects are allowed because this tiny
18 project is deemed successful, that will create
19 massive levels of pollution.

20 Will the diseases and parasites, common
21 occurrences in crowded pens, be spread to wild
22 fish? How will the pesticides and antibiotics
23 used to control these diseases and parasites
24 impact local species and water quality? Most
25 importantly, here in Sarasota County, will the

1 high level of excrement intensify future episodes
2 of red tide? Will the cages themselves perhaps
3 even become incubators for red tide? Who knows.

4 As an aside here, a Sarasota Herald Tribune
5 article noted that, quote, the purpose of
6 operations like this is to create a sustainable
7 source of seafood. That is absolutely not true.
8 The purpose is for a limited liability company to
9 make millions of dollars. And the purpose is
10 also for other stakeholders like Mote to make
11 money too.

12 This factory farming, like all factory
13 farming, is the antithesis of sustainability.
14 When we raise animals for food we put many more
15 calories of food into them than we get in return.
16 Mostly what we get back is massive amounts of
17 excrement. We don't need that in the Gulf.

18 Now, I'm not a scientist, but I do read what
19 the scientists have to say. Many have spoken out
20 against fish factory farming for some of the
21 reasons I noted. Many also infer that the
22 primary cause of red tide is excessive nutrients
23 in the water. So why on earth would we add so
24 much fish excrement to our water.

25 I know the folks at Mote disagree, but I

1 prefer to listen to the scientists who do not
2 take money from the polluters and profits --
3 (Interruption by audience applause.) Not those
4 who have their hands in the cookie jar.

5 So let's say no to fish factory farming.
6 It's an especially bad idea here in the Gulf.

7 I live near the beach and I witnessed the
8 incredible horrific devastation of red tide less
9 than two years ago. We should be doing anything
10 and everything we can to try and avoid its
11 reoccurrence. This would be a giant step
12 backwards. Thank you.

13 JAN CONNERY: Thank you. Number 30. And do
14 we have 31? Okay. And 32 and 33, I invite you
15 to come up if you have those numbers.

16 CHRIS BALES: Hi. My name is Chris Bales, a
17 Sarasota resident. Our family came here 60 years
18 ago when Mote started their first research
19 laboratory.

20 I'm upset with Mote. I'm sorry. After 35
21 years of research, the Mote red tide research,
22 they have been researching it since 1984, they
23 tell us we can do our part to prevent red tide.
24 Pick up your dog waste. Huh.

25 Mote has been studying red tide since 1984,

1 but yet they beat around the bush to what feeds
2 the blooms. They quote on their website, even
3 though we don't know everything yet about how
4 human activity relate to a red tide, Florida red
5 tide that has moved ashore, we do know there's
6 potential, potential, for coastal nutrients to
7 influence the blooms. And we certainly know that
8 excess nutrients and other kinds of pollution
9 flowing into our coastal ecosystems are generally
10 bad for those systems and should be reduced.

11 So why are they supporting a permit to add
12 more nutrients to our ecosystem? In fact, it's
13 really upsetting that on the big sugar website,
14 of all places, most leading Florida expert is
15 quoted regarding the causes of red tide because
16 they're so noncommittal about those causes
17 although they have been studying it since 1984.

18 Mote does further state that red tide
19 develops 10 to 40 miles offshore, away from
20 human-contributed nutrient sources, but now they
21 are wanting to put those nutrient sources right
22 where red tide starts. So, essentially, they are
23 going to be making a sandwich of red tide that
24 starts out 40 miles and in shore. It's very
25 scary.

1 60 years of Mote Marine research and not to
2 mention millions of dollars of grant money has
3 not translated into safer water quality in
4 Sarasota today and our marine life continues to
5 decline. I thought having Mote here we would
6 have the most pristine waters, that they would be
7 the ones to sound the alarms to let us know we
8 need to do this type of -- anyway. I forgot.

9 When does the research begin to translate to
10 public benefit? Shame on you for supporting more
11 pollution in our Gulf and risking our Sarasota
12 public health. I ask you, Mote, to do your part.
13 Pick up your fish farm waste and think about how
14 your actions will negatively impact our marine
15 environment. Thank you.

16 JAN CONNERY: Thank you. 31. 32. Do we
17 have anyone with 33? 34? Okay. And how about
18 35? Yes. Okay. Be a good time to come up then.
19 Thanks.

20 MICHAEL MCGRATH: Hello and good evening. My
21 name Mike McGrath, and I'm an organizer for the
22 Florida chapter of the Sierra Club and I live on
23 the water in Lee County.

24 Before the proceedings of today's public
25 hearing, more than 30 concerned citizens gathered

1 around the common cause, checking our goal to
2 ensure our waters remain free of excessive
3 nutrient pollution. Today we have chanted, waved
4 our signs about, and let the public know that
5 industrial fish farms have got to go. To those
6 who drove by our demonstration we sent a loud and
7 clear message. Not here.

8 With the remaining time for my public
9 comment, I'd like to raise some of the reasons we
10 hold such urgent concerns around permit
11 potentially being granted Kampachi Farms for the
12 installation of industrial fish farms here in our
13 Gulf.

14 Across the world, industrial fish farms have
15 been linked to toxins such as untreated fish
16 waste, excessive feed, agriculture drugs and
17 pesticides, heavy metals, and other chemicals.
18 The close quarters of these pens are incubators
19 for disease and pests that can threaten wild fish
20 stocks and other marine life, which also could
21 further threaten sustainable commercial fishing
22 operations, putting a blow to our local economy.
23 They also threaten marine mammals, sea turtles,
24 sharks, and seabirds and other wildlife with
25 issues such as entanglement.

1 Finally, we all know about the outbreak of
2 red tide and also its relation to excessive
3 nutrient pollution. The release of fish food and
4 waste becomes excessive nutrient pollution that
5 will only further fuel algal blooms and also red
6 tide outbreaks along our Gulf shores.

7 Other science points to the fact that
8 aquaculture can be done right. How about we
9 challenge that with some questions to consider
10 further. How will Kampachi account for
11 hurricanes that rip through our coast and ensure
12 they don't contaminate our waters when they break
13 the pens? What precedent also will this set in
14 other permits if Kampachi is allowed to proceed
15 with this installation? How do we let them not
16 open up our Gulf coast to further fish farming
17 operations that are industrial and often
18 contribute to excessive nutrient pollution?

19 Industrial fish farms are not meeting our
20 seafood demands. Our government should be
21 building more support for standard seafood permit
22 that does not pollute our oceans.

23 Industrial fish farming installations such as
24 Kampachi Farms only further distress the balance
25 of our ocean ecosystem, negatively impact the

1 public health, threaten our local economy and way
2 of life. We need to deny the permit from
3 Kampachi Farms. Thank you very much.

4 JAN CONNERY: Thank you. Last call for
5 number 32 if you have that. Seeing no takers,
6 we'll go to 33.

7 SHARON DROSICK (phonetic): Good evening. My
8 name is Sharon Drosick. I'm a resident and a
9 small business owner in Sarasota. I'm against
10 the fish farm project.

11 We are facing a critical time. The planet
12 and the Gulf needs our attention. Our action
13 will have a direct impact on both. Marine
14 aquaculture isn't the answer. Marine aq. will
15 cause a continued strain on our troubled waters.

16 While fish is nutrient dense loaded with
17 beneficial vitamins, these factory farm fish
18 won't be the same quality. Fish raised on GMO
19 grains will continue to contribute to our health
20 epidemic. Look at the state of factory farms.
21 Sick animals create a sick population.

22 Our water is life. We have a responsibility
23 and an obligation to care for this body of water.
24 A fish farm will add to a toxic algae bloom and a
25 chemical garden on the Gulf.

1 Let's look for solutions to heal the water,
2 to rebuild fish population. Currently we are
3 destroying the waters, killing fish with each
4 algae bloom.

5 A factory fish farm is a short-sighted
6 Band-Aid to a bigger problem. We should look to
7 the root cause and start to rebuild there. This
8 project is environmentally irresponsible. Please
9 deny this permit.

10 JAN CONNERY: Thank you. 34. And do we have
11 35? Do we have 35? You're 35. And 36?

12 RACHAEL CURRAN: I'm 33.

13 JAN CONNERY: Oh, you're 33. I missed you.
14 You will go next.

15 PAUL ZAJICEK: So good evening. I'm Paul
16 Zajicek. I'm the executive director of the
17 National Aquaculture Association.

18 We're a nonprofit trade group made up of
19 farmers that grow what you're concerned about
20 today. There's about 3,000 farms in the United
21 States. We grow a wide variety of fish,
22 different invertebrates, reptiles, crustaceans,
23 shrimp, these sorts of things in all kinds of
24 locations including net pens.

25 So net pens in the United States are really

1 not a new idea. The Hawaiian farms that have
2 been mentioned have been active since 1999.
3 There have been net pens in the in-shore waters
4 of Maine and the states -- the states of Maine
5 and Washington since the 1970s. These are
6 regulated by both the federal agencies that you
7 see here today and the state agencies. They have
8 been doing a darn good job producing fish and
9 seafood that you enjoy.

10 So aquaculture is considered, under the Clean
11 Water Act, a nonpoint source, so we fall into
12 industrial waste category and you're discussing
13 the National Pollution Discharge Elimination
14 System permit and the 500 pages the agency has
15 put together. I would really encourage you to
16 read those documents. They're pretty well done.

17 This is a small farm. 88,000 fish in the
18 Gulf of Mexico. I mean, you have to think about
19 it, would fish feces really show up on your
20 beaches from 45 miles out at sea. Highly
21 unlikely when you think of all the wild fish out
22 there that are doing the very same thing.

23 So I think you want to think about this and
24 realize that these guys, Kampachi Farms, the
25 Florida Sea Grant people, have really put

1 themselves out there to receive these comments,
2 to hear from you, and to improve what they're
3 doing. We have benefited from 40 some years of
4 net pen production in the United States to be at
5 the place we are now. You're concerned about the
6 location, different kinds of issues. The
7 agencies are here to listen and see if they can
8 be mitigated.

9 There was a fishery management plan for
10 marine aquaculture in the Gulf for several years.
11 It wasn't acted on because it was litigated.
12 Associated with that fishery management was an
13 Environmental Impact Statement, so that's
14 available for your review and read it.

15 We, as a society, we don't operate in a
16 vacuum. Right now in China there's an African
17 Swine Fever that's killed more than half of the
18 pork that's there. This is going to completely
19 upset the protein balance in the world.

20 We import proteins. We never used to do this
21 before. If we're going to be a country that's
22 self-sufficient, has quality products, do we want
23 to import those or do we want to look at these
24 regulations and say, can we do this and can we do
25 this right. The history so far is yes, we can.

1 So be open minded. Think about this. Look
2 at the documents.

3 We have a website, the National Aquaculture
4 Association. There's an e-mail there. E-mail me
5 questions. I would be happy to respond. Thank
6 you.

7 JAN CONNERY: 32. 33. We got a little mixed
8 up there, but that's okay. We'll take you right
9 now.

10 RACHAEL CURRAN: My name is Rachael Curran,
11 and I'm a staff attorney at the Center for
12 Biological Diversity here in Florida. We are an
13 endangered species advocacy group dedicated to
14 securing a future for all species large and small
15 and their habitats.

16 We oppose this project and would like to,
17 first and foremost, point out EPA's unlawful
18 Environmental Review culminating in an inadequate
19 draft Environmental Assessment and preliminary
20 FONSI. EPA must evaluate cumulative and direct
21 impacts of this pilot project together with the
22 full and true extent of all full-scale
23 aquaculture projects planned to follow.

24 We know red tide starts offshore and reaches
25 higher concentrations in nutrient-laden water

1 near shore. What is the impact of a red tide
2 bloom starts offshore, approaches near-shore
3 nutrient-laden waters, and it is also fed from
4 behind by this net pen aquaculture creation?

5 There are over 20 listed species and the
6 Environmental Assessment merely lists them
7 without any detailed analysis of the impacts of
8 this type of operation. We are particularly
9 concerned about the Northwest Atlantic extinct
10 populations like loggerhead sea turtles.

11 There has also been no adequate analysis of
12 the public health impacts of not only the
13 environmental harms caused by this operation, but
14 of the public health impact of consuming the fish
15 produced.

16 We'd also like to point out that there has
17 been no in-depth climate change analysis, not on
18 the project's impact on climate change itself,
19 but on the climate change's impact on that
20 project. As oceans warm, as red tide increases
21 as a result of those oceans warming, that draft
22 EA doesn't even mention it. These are failures
23 that are challengeable through a court and we
24 would like to remind the EPA of that.

25 JAN CONNERY: Thank you.

1 VICTORIA SHEA: Good evening. My name is
2 Victoria Shea, and I'm a law clerk with the
3 Center for Biological Diversity.

4 I was born and raised here in Sarasota. I
5 grew up on our world-renowned beaches and I want
6 to continue to enjoy them.

7 This issue before us is unprecedented as it
8 enters the novel frontier of factory fish farming
9 in federal waters. If approved, this factory
10 farm would discharge untreated waste, chemicals,
11 and antibiotics which have the potential to
12 directly impact the health of our coastal
13 community. Because it could pose a risk to human
14 health and the environment, I strongly oppose
15 allowing factory fish farming to invade our
16 coast.

17 First, the proposed facility may pose
18 hazardous risks to the public health. The highly
19 concentrated use of antibiotics on factory fish
20 farms can cause drug resistant bacteria to
21 develop, which has the potential to impact humans
22 by contributing to the public health crisis of
23 antibiotic resistance. Also, fish produced in
24 factory farms face exposure to higher levels of
25 contaminants in wild fish. This may be lead to

1 health risks for consumers.

2 Second, the impacts to the environment would
3 be detrimental. I have not forgotten the reality
4 of the 2018 red tide, one of the worst in our
5 state's history. Introducing this large amount
6 of pollutants to our coast has the potential to
7 exacerbate red tide. Why would we allow anything
8 to make red tide worse than it already is.

9 Also we must consider the internationally
10 recognized dire rate of destruction of Florida's
11 barrier reef. Given the proximity of the reef to
12 the pollution of this factory farm, we must
13 protect this fragile ecosystem from the corporate
14 greed of factory farming.

15 It is unclear to me why the agencies who are
16 responsible for protecting our oceans are
17 supporting and expanding this outdated and
18 unnecessary industry, especially in light of the
19 ecological, social, and economic problems
20 associated with these operations.

21 And for these reasons, I request that the EPA
22 deny this permit.

23 JAN CONNERY: Thank you. Are you number 36,
24 sir?

25 JOHN MERLINO: I am number 36.

1 JAN CONNERY: Okay. That's very good. Do we
2 have 37? 37 right over there. Oh, good.

3 38? We do. Okay. Probably in a good place
4 right there.

5 39? Do we have 39? Okay. I'm not seeing a
6 39.

7 How about a 40? Oh, good. Okay. Thank you.
8 Go right ahead.

9 JOHN MERLINO: Good evening. My name is John
10 Merlino. I'm a local Sarasota County resident.

11 I have one question for the EPA tonight.

12 Why? Why here in the Gulf? Why now?

13 Why would this be a good idea in a location
14 already suffering repeated extended and
15 devastating harmful algae blooms? Why here? Why
16 now?

17 Why would this be a good idea in a location
18 already experiencing an extreme population
19 explosion? A population explosion occurring so
20 rapidly that municipal sewage infrastructure is
21 not able to keep up. How many millions of
22 gallons of nutrient-rich sewage are dumped into
23 local waters annually? I'm pretty sure the EPA
24 knows the answer to that question because it all
25 gets filed with them. Why here? Why now?

1 Why would this be a good idea in a location
2 already experiencing annual deluge of
3 nutrient-rich agricultural runoff? Billions of
4 gallons of nutrient-rich water enter the Gulf
5 annually via the Mississippi River and Lake
6 Okeechobee watersheds. Industrial aquaculture is
7 one of the biggest contributors to nutrient
8 overload in our waters. I fail to see how
9 industrial fish farming will not add to an
10 already devastating problem. Again I would say,
11 why here? Why now?

12 Why would this be a good idea in a location
13 already experiencing an annual deluge of
14 nutrient-rich runoff related to phosphate mining?
15 Each day Mosaic Phosphate has permits from the
16 EPA to pull upwards of 60 million gallons of
17 clean water from our aquifer, our aquifer, not
18 the federal government's, Florida's, to dilute
19 their toxic wastewater and send it to the Gulf.
20 Again I will ask, why here? Why now?

21 Why would this be a good idea in such a
22 shallow body of water? Gulf of Mexico is not an
23 ocean. It's not the Atlantic, it's not the
24 Pacific. The Gulf lacks the depth and the flow
25 to properly flush and dilute nutrient waste.

1 Repeated harmful blooms should be evidence enough
2 to prove this. Again I would say, why here? Why
3 now?

4 Why would this be a good idea considering the
5 frequency of large hurricane activity in the
6 Gulf? How can industrial fish farming guarantee
7 us that storms will not cause harmful releases?
8 To date, all other forms of industrial
9 agriculture have failed to succeed with
10 containment in extreme weather. You just have to
11 look at the experience with hog farms in
12 North Carolina in the most recent hurricanes.
13 Devastating.

14 I will close by saying that I fail to see how
15 allowing industrial fish farming in Gulf waters
16 will do anything but add to the issues I've
17 already stated. Fish farming is proven to add
18 nutrients to the water and introduce illness and
19 poor genetics to local species. Nothing good
20 could come of this venture for the Gulf
21 ecosystem.

22 This is solely a for-profit venture. The
23 million dollar question is who profits? Not the
24 residents of Florida, not the Gulf ecosystem.
25 Who profits? Not all the people in the room

1 tonight that I'm hearing say, no, we don't want
2 this. Who profits?

3 Again I will say, why here? Why now? The
4 answer should be never here and never ever.
5 Thank you.

6 JAN CONNERY: 37.

7 SAMANTHA GENTRUP: Good evening. My name is
8 Samantha Gentrup. I'm a teacher, I'm a homeowner
9 in Sarasota County, and I'm also the president of
10 a local environmental nonprofit called Hands
11 Along the Water.

12 I'm here tonight to remind us that the
13 decisions made here will most impact the
14 every-day people, the residents, the small
15 business owners, the parents, grandparents, and
16 children in this community, not the large
17 corporations or the organizations that these
18 corporations fund. To open fish farms off our
19 coast would be done so by ignoring facts as well
20 as the clear will of the people.

21 The facts. In 2018 the ecological disaster
22 that crossed Southwest Florida with devastating
23 red tide killed over 900 sea turtles, over 500
24 Manatees, multiple whale sharks, dozens of
25 dolphins and marine birds, and millions of fish

1 and crabs. And these are just the animals that
2 we know of.

3 Hotels were operating at less than 20 percent
4 occupancy. Our economy lost millions. And small
5 family businesses that had been operating for
6 generations went out of business. After all of
7 this loss it's the tax payers, the every-day
8 people of Florida, that bailed out our state as
9 our tax money was used to supplement the economy
10 instead of being used to fully fund programs such
11 as Florida Forever as voters overwhelmingly asked
12 for at the polls.

13 But what about the phrase pushed out by
14 certain organizations, red tide is natural?
15 Well, yes, it's naturally occurring, but so is E.
16 coli. The problem is we're feeding it steroids
17 in the form of nutrient pollution. These
18 nutrients have been building up for decades along
19 our coast with evidence provided near the water
20 outlets.

21 I spend this time recapping so you can see
22 how important this decision is. The last thing
23 we need is fish farms producing more nutrient
24 pollution, spreading diseases, leaking
25 antibiotics and GMO materials into our already

1 damaged ecosystems.

2 A gentleman earlier mentioned swine flu. He
3 mentioned this as an excuse for us to have fish
4 farms here in the United States of America.
5 Swine flu originated from raising animals in
6 confined conditions. How ironic that he brings
7 this up -- (Interruption by audience applause.)

8 The only reason to vote for this is to
9 benefit the huge corporations on the backs of the
10 very people that have built this community
11 generation after generation. Up to the point I
12 got up here, 30 people had spoken against this
13 with six speaking for this and most of the six
14 have financial interest in these offshore fish
15 farms. We outnumber them five to one. Please
16 let the record show that.

17 Look around this room. You cannot turn a
18 blind eye and pretend not to see the will of the
19 people that is so clearly visible here tonight.
20 Will greed win out over the wellbeing of the
21 every-day people of Southwest Florida? Will
22 profit be placed again above planet or will the
23 side of reason be chosen?

24 Look these people in the eyes. They know how
25 the ecosystem equal a healthy economy. The

1 question is does the EPA?

2 As a member of this community, in unity with
3 almost a dozen environmental organizations here
4 tonight, I am asking that offshore fish farms be
5 voted down and the application be denied. Thank
6 you very much.

7 JAN CONNERY: Thank you. Thank you. Number
8 38.

9 ANTHONY MCCHESENEY: Hi. My name is Anthony
10 McChesney, and I am also a board member of the
11 local environmental group here, Hands Along the
12 Water.

13 I have lived here in Sarasota County for over
14 40 years. I continue to engage in many
15 water-related activities such as scuba diving,
16 surfing, fishing, boating, et cetera. I have
17 seen the quality of these activities degrade over
18 the years, especially in the last few years, all
19 due to overdevelopment and excessive nutrients
20 going into our waters.

21 Now Kampachi Farms wants to set up shop to do
22 business that will also contribute to unnecessary
23 nutrients and toxins directly going into our
24 waters without any way of filtering these out.
25 So now we will have an onslaught of harmful

1 nutrients coming from land and now directly into
2 our Gulf.

3 Yes, this current project is just the
4 beginning of many more if it gets the green light
5 to move forward. We in the State of Florida will
6 pay the price of further degradation of our
7 waters and the wildlife that lives in and around
8 it.

9 I wrote a letter of opposition to Kampachi
10 Farms a couple of months ago when I first heard
11 of this. In the letter from your response you
12 stated that you are working towards solutions
13 that have been shown to offer great potential and
14 that your concern for ocean welfare is what
15 drives you in your work.

16 I now would like to address the elephant in
17 the room concerning our increased degradation of
18 our waters not only locally, but globally. And
19 that is the mindset that we humans must use our
20 precious land, use toxic chemicals, use clean
21 water and other natural resources for corporate
22 animal meat consumption. And, yes, that includes
23 fish farms.

24 The feed that is commonly used to feed farmed
25 fish is soy and corn, just like the rest of our

1 corporate farm-raised animals. The most
2 detrimental crops that are grown on millions of
3 acres and that destroys our environment from
4 nutrients and poisonous chemicals is soy and
5 corn. Not for us to eat, but to feed it to our
6 farm-raised meat corporations.

7 If we the people truly care and want to make
8 a significant improvements for our environment,
9 then stop eating meats. Stop supporting these
10 destructive corporate practices. We humans do
11 not need to eat the meat of any type of animal
12 flesh to lead a happy, healthy life.

13 Our Gulf of Mexico has the largest dead zone
14 in the world where the Mississippi River dumps
15 into it. The feed that is grown in these meat
16 production farms are mostly based along rivers
17 and streams that feed into the Mississippi River.

18 Kampachi Farms, if you are truly concerned
19 for our oceans' welfare and you truly want to
20 make a positive environmental impact on feeding
21 us, then study and build an organic land
22 plant-based farm to grow everything we need,
23 whereas you can control the filtration of
24 excessive nutrients. This mentality is the
25 future. It is our hope for a cleaner planet and

1 is catching on rapidly. Why not join in on
2 what's really good for us and our planet.

3 To the EPA, I strongly oppose this permit.
4 Thank you.

5 JAN CONNERY: I believe we did not have a 39,
6 but I will ask it -- oh, you're 39. Oh, you're
7 38? Okay.

8 SUE ANN LEVIN: Sue Ann Levin, resident
9 Siesta Key.

10 Upon hearing everything that I heard tonight,
11 I'm appalled and outraged because the people that
12 came to support this farm, it seems like to them
13 it's a done deal.

14 EPA, Environmental Protection Agency, what
15 are we protected from? If a private individual
16 did their job the way the EPA did their job, we
17 wouldn't have a job.

18 We have red tide almost every year. They
19 talk about it, they do nothing to stop it. They
20 don't stop the phosphates, they don't stop the
21 sugar industry. What is their role if not to
22 protect us?

23 And yet, here they are trying to bring a fish
24 farm on board, not thinking about the people,
25 they're thinking about business and big business

1 at that. And if it is successful they will open
2 up more of these fish farms and we will destroy
3 the Gulf. And then what will the EPA do? Not
4 much because every time there's a big storm they
5 throw tons of sewage into the Gulf of Mexico
6 because we do not have adequate facilities for
7 the growing population of Sarasota.

8 And I often wonder, how can the EPA let them
9 build all these buildings when they can't take
10 care of the sewage. That's what your job is.

11 Don't allow this fish farm. Please. Thank
12 you.

13 JAN CONNERY: Thank you. 40. And 41.

14 CAYMAN MOSELEY: I'm number 39.

15 JAN CONNERY: 39. I'm sorry. We seem to
16 have gotten our --

17 CAYMAN MOSELEY: Hello. My name is Cayman
18 Moseley, and I'm a 17-year-old clean water
19 activist.

20 I stand for the youth of Florida that loves
21 to enjoy the Gulf waters each and every single
22 day. And I just wanted to say, if you guys can't
23 tell me this little experiment of yours is not
24 going to affect mine, my little brother's future,
25 and the rest of the youth of Florida, then why

1 even do it?

2 This is where I and many other youth enjoy
3 surfing, swimming, skim boarding, fishing, and a
4 variety of other things. This is my future, my
5 brother's future, and all the youth of Florida's
6 future, and it's a place I love.

7 So my advice to you guys is that the risk
8 really does drastically outweigh the benefits at
9 hand here. So not here, not now, and not ever.
10 Thank you.

11 JAN CONNERY: Thank you. 40.

12 MARGARET JEAN CANNON: That was an excellent
13 speech, so thank you.

14 Okay. My name is Margaret Jean Cannon and
15 I'm Siesta Key Association. I'm also a vice
16 president with Tiffany Sands Condo Association.

17 And basically what I'm looking at is where's
18 the baseline. You talked about doing some
19 baseline measurements of the current water or
20 ongoing water quality. I would like to see
21 baseline measurements done out in the circles.
22 And I would like to see those base measurements
23 go in some areas that would get close to the
24 shore.

25 Who will actually be monitoring this? My

1 understanding, it's going to be the people in the
2 fish farm. Well, that's not independent
3 monitoring. I would like to see any kind of
4 monitoring and testing, if this done, to be done
5 so the public can see it and see what's going on.

6 Where is the baseline for the migrating
7 species? We have hammerhead sharks that go up
8 and down our coast. We have our turtles that are
9 in migration. We also have other kinds of fish
10 that are in danger. What are the baselines for
11 the migrating species and the species in that
12 particular area and who is going to be monitoring
13 this and making sure that they are not being
14 impacted?

15 We recognize that those fish will be around
16 that fish farm and will be eating that grain
17 that's falling off as well as attacking. So
18 there could be even these animals that are being
19 caught up in the nets.

20 And while the current movements are
21 supposedly not strong, we do know that there is
22 currents, as someone had mentioned earlier, which
23 bring the water into our shores. So whether it's
24 strong or not, we are going to get it into our
25 shores.

1 The other thing we have is we have the
2 movement of the water as the storms stir it up
3 and it also stirs up the bottom and brings all
4 that's on the bottom back up into that current
5 and comes into our shores. So I really have
6 concerns about that.

7 The marine ecosystem can also entangle other
8 fish and can attract other bait fish to those
9 cages. The other thing you see is that this is a
10 test. So what's the plan for doing it larger?
11 This is the concern we have, is that one test
12 leads to very large.

13 What we have today, we have onshore fish
14 farms that do an excellent job and when they use
15 the -- agriculture uses the by-products to be
16 fertilizer and the fish get to be able -- why
17 can't we expand that? Mote did an excellent job
18 with the sturgeon and I really enjoyed the caviar
19 while it lasted.

20 I also want to say, what's the impact on our
21 commercial fisherman? What about our sports
22 fisherman?

23 You know, when I walk the beach every single
24 solitary day, you should see my pictures, I can't
25 stop taking them, but my concern is that I'm in

1 the water all the time. And I don't worry about
2 if I've got a cut on myself, I'm in that water.
3 So what happens when we start getting these kinds
4 of nutrients into our shore and antibiotics? And
5 they will happen.

6 I want to say also that the -- there is one
7 thing I wanted to say that. Okay. Sorry. One
8 more thing. I lost it.

9 I thank you very much everybody for
10 listening.

11 JAN CONNERY: Thank you. So do we have a 42?
12 Are you 42? And 43?

13 ROSANNA MARIE NEIL: 43.

14 JAN CONNERY: 42 and 43. Okay.

15 HALLIE TEMPLETON: I'm 45.

16 JAN CONNERY: You're 45?

17 HALLIE TEMPLETON: I'm 46. Sorry.

18 JAN CONNERY: 46. Do we have a 44? Okay.
19 Good. All right. Thanks.

20 JANE ARMSTRONG: My name is Jane Armstrong.
21 I live in Venice. I was born in 1951.

22 JEANEANNE GETTLE: You can take the mic out
23 of the holder. It will be more comfortable for
24 you. There you go.

25 JANE ARMSTRONG: I've been here a lot. I was

1 born in Tampa and I grew up in Bradenton. And I
2 remember red tide when I was a kid. It would
3 last about two weeks, three weeks, maybe and it
4 was gone.

5 What we experienced two years ago was off the
6 bloody chart. It was off the charts. We know
7 and have known for many years that nutrient
8 overloading is a significant issue.

9 I remember hearing years ago that red tide
10 starts offshore. What nobody has mentioned here
11 is that the center of the state is
12 phosphate-enriched land. Mosaic is here because
13 of that.

14 The phosphate goes down into the aquifer
15 periodically with the ebb and flow of water cycle
16 and doesn't stop at the shoreline, folks. It
17 goes out offshore. Is that where these initial
18 blooms are happening? I have yet to hear anybody
19 say that that's not what's going on.

20 I guess what I'm here to say is that clearly
21 we have way too much nutrient overload going on
22 and adding anything to this perfect storm that
23 we're right on the precipice of is a bad idea.
24 That said, the same company does work where they
25 cultivate bivalves. I was a freshwater biology

1 person long ago and far away. Bivalves clean the
2 water. Why aren't we talking about that?

3 They don't have to be fed anything. They're
4 filter feeders. Could we consider that?

5 Using this proposal as a way to boost our
6 economy and our revenue and create a food supply,
7 it goes without argument, this is not the best
8 way to do it.

9 My son, who never graduated from high school
10 because he's one of those outside of the box
11 kids, created an aquaponics system in our house
12 right now. We're not eating the koi because
13 they're now our pets, but we're eating the heck
14 out of kale and lettuce and beets and all kinds
15 of neat stuff that comes from that system.

16 We have evolved a way a living on this planet
17 that is power over and we've broken it. We have
18 got to move forward by learning how to live with
19 and do a power with. That's where everybody wins
20 and that's where the environment wins as well.

21 Thank you.

22 JAN CONNERY: Thank you. I believe we're at
23 42.

24 HALLIE TEMPLETON: I'm 46. I'm sorry.

25 JAN CONNERY: Do we have 42 here? Nobody's

1 42. What about 43? 43. Please go ahead.

2 ROSANNA MARIE NEIL: Good evening. My name
3 is Rosanna Marie Neil, and I'm speaking on behalf
4 of the Northwest Atlantic Marine Alliance, NAMA,
5 which is a proud member of the Don't Cage Our
6 Ocean Coalition.

7 Our organization and many of the fisherman in
8 our network are strongly opposed to the Velella
9 Epsilon project for multiple reasons. First of
10 all, it's morally wrong to allow a corporation to
11 enclose and control an area of the ocean,
12 essentially converting a public resource to
13 private property. This dangerous trend has
14 already played out on land and has led to a few
15 agribusinesses controlling the majority of farm
16 land. The last thing that we need is for the
17 ocean to become occupied and burdened by
18 corporate-owned factory fish farms.

19 Secondly, the ocean is the home of wild fish.
20 Introducing vast amounts of farmed finfish in
21 cages would likely ruin the ecosystem, not to
22 mention the beauty, richness and wonder of the
23 ocean that draws people from near and far to this
24 area.

25 Fish farms are known to cause declines in

1 wild fish populations from the use of forage fish
2 and fishmeal and other direct impacts, including
3 discharge of waste, chemical pollution, and
4 possible fish escapes. No amount of technology
5 can defy the laws of nature in thermodynamics,
6 period.

7 Thirdly, this project will be a burden on
8 coastal communities in Florida and local
9 industries like tourism and fishing. This is a
10 classic example of a project that would benefit
11 one company at the expense of the public.
12 Reducing reliance on imported seafood is not a
13 valid justification for contaminating our ocean
14 with offshore fish farms.

15 Approximately 84 percent of domestic wild
16 caught seafood is exported and processed overseas
17 and a significant portion is reimported to the
18 U.S. To lower our carbon footprint, we should be
19 focused on replenishing wild fish populations,
20 investing in sustainable and diverse fishing
21 fleets, and supporting domestic seafood
22 processing facilities and markets.

23 In conclusion, we urge the EPA to deny the
24 permit for this ill-advised project. Thank you.

25 JAN CONNERY: Thanks. So do we have 44?

1 You're 44. Good.

2 JANET FENNESSY: Hello. My name is Jan
3 Fennessy. I'm an advocate of the Clean Water
4 Tribe.

5 JAN CONNERY: Just step up a little closer.

6 JANET FENNESSY: I'm usually on crutches, so
7 I'm winging it tonight.

8 My name is Jan Fennessy. I'm an advocate of
9 the Clean Water Tribe, and I own a home near
10 Manasota Beach.

11 What I would like to do is talk about the
12 fish farming, the aquaculture, the problems and
13 concerns. The following is a list of concerns.

14 Can you hear me?

15 JAN CONNERY: Yes.

16 JANET FENNESSY: The following is a list of
17 concerns associated with the proposed aquaculture
18 project. Following this brief narrative, your
19 commentary concerning the information presented
20 will be greatly appreciated.

21 Number one. Pollution. The density of fish
22 within a given pen will generate a given
23 area/concentration of effluence/waste, which will
24 then move with the currents that exists within
25 the Gulf of Mexico, having a potentially negative

1 effect on the environment downstream.

2 Two. To what extent will the use of
3 antibiotics, vaccines, disinfectants be used?
4 Also, what substances will be used to prevent
5 corrosion of equipment and what collective effect
6 will that have on the environment immediate and
7 downstream?

8 Three. Given an ever-increasing frequency
9 and intensity of toxic algae blooms, commonly
10 known as red tide outbreaks, within the Gulf of
11 Mexico, along with a projected increase in the
12 average October, November water temperature, an
13 aquaculture project such as proposed appear to be
14 somewhat high in the risk development with
15 respect to a protracted fish die-off.

16 Four. Please speak to the word prototype
17 fish farm. Should this proposed fish farm
18 aquaculture project maintain feasibility, what
19 will be the limits in terms of its potential for
20 expansion? Are there already preset goals and
21 perimeters in place or is that aspect of the
22 proposed fish farm somewhat empirical?

23 Last but not least, within the scientific
24 community, what sources of knowledge, research,
25 and expertise will you be consulting with as the

1 proposed aquaculture project moves forward? And
2 in terms of objectivity, where will their funding
3 be derived from?

4 And I definitely do not agree with this
5 aquaculture coming into Sarasota County. Thank
6 you.

7 JAN CONNERY: We're up to 45. Finally. And
8 46, 47. Do we have a 48? Oh, perfect. Thank
9 you.

10 JODANNA OSCEOLA: Thank you. This wait has
11 been about as long as this pregnancy.

12 Ladies and gentlemen, Mote, and the EPA,
13 thank you for taking your time to listen to all
14 of us and our cares and concerns for and against.

15 As a mother and long-term resident, water
16 protector --

17 JEANEANNE GETTLE: Excuse me. Can you give
18 us your name.

19 JODANNA OSCEOLA: Oh, I apologize. Jodanna
20 Osceola.

21 As a mother and long-term resident of
22 Sarasota County, a water protector, I stand here
23 to speak and strongly oppose the permit as it
24 stands for the Epsilon project in the Gulf of
25 Mexico. Our Gulf is not for sale. The EPA

1 should be listening to the voters and protect the
2 residents who live here and do not want it here.

3 I'm also a mother. As you can tell, this is
4 baby number three on the way. I love our Gulf.
5 I have taught numerous children to swim in it. I
6 can't wait to teach this one too.

7 I'm the mother and wife to a Florida Native
8 American family. We routinely drive between the
9 Everglades and Sarasota County and I've seen
10 firsthand the damage in nature from there to here
11 by what is already allowed under the statutes
12 from the EPA and the Army Corps of Engineers and
13 their discharge. I have seen what happens to
14 nature as Lake O. opens and two weeks later we
15 have the worst red tide outbreak in the last 20
16 years that I've lived here.

17 My brothers, as firefighters, had to clean up
18 our beaches. Over 2 million pounds, I believe,
19 as firefighters with masks on. As a mother, I
20 dealt with respiratory things. We all lived
21 here. We all know what happens with red tide.

22 But I digress. I'm not asking that it
23 doesn't happen. I am asking that it does not
24 happen the way it is stated. I am asking that
25 the permit is not given where it is requested.

1 I'm asking that the EPA and residents of
2 Sarasota County and Mote become more responsible
3 stewards in our approach to both clean up our
4 Gulf with a proven method of fish farming and
5 sustainable resources before we put it in the
6 Gulf of Mexico. Our Gulf is not, at the time,
7 ready to handle an experiment of this size.

8 Man does not know better than nature. And
9 first we have to clean up the Gulf so that the
10 fish can come back. We need to keep the
11 experiment out of the Gulf.

12 Most aqua farm is wonderful. I'm a big fan
13 of the caviar project.

14 Kampachi and Mote both need to search out
15 different locations and one unmanned pen that is
16 visible by a robot once a week to refill the food
17 in a shallow depth in warm water where the cage
18 has not been tested in those temperatures is not
19 adequate. Our residents have seen it. The fish
20 food is not acceptable because it's a soy based.

21 In conclusion, the blue-green algae combined
22 with red tide nutrients, antibiotics, and the
23 flesh eating bacteria with the Lake O. discharge
24 are all a recipe for disaster killing our beaches
25 and towards living in Florida and life in

1 Florida. Thank you for your time. And I
2 apologize for the stumbles.

3 JAN CONNERY: Thank you very much. 46.

4 HALLIE TEMPLETON: Hi. My name Hallie
5 Templeton. I'm with Friends of the Earth. We
6 have 2.3 million members and activists across the
7 United States, including 80,000 here in Florida,
8 and I'm here on behalf of all of them.

9 First I want to point out that we did file
10 public comments back in September when this plan
11 was first proposed and there was not a public
12 hearing on the book yet and the extension of the
13 commenting period hadn't happened yet, so we only
14 had 30 days to weigh in.

15 So first I want to thank EPA for listening to
16 public outcry and scheduling this hearing and
17 listening to everybody. And to continue to be --
18 EPA to continue listening to the public outcry.
19 We've had many more opposed than we have had
20 supportive here tonight. So we appreciate you
21 listening and please continue to listen.

22 So first I want to point out that we oppose
23 the plan as it is. EPA's Environmental
24 Assessment and biological opinion for the permit
25 violate the National Environmental Policy Act and

1 the Endangered Species Act. They don't go far
2 enough. They don't fully analyze the risks that
3 are mandated by law.

4 We worked with Center for Biological
5 Diversity and the public comments we already
6 filed and we're going to elaborate those and file
7 more at the end of the commenting period just
8 before February. Everybody should file comments
9 by then if you're for or against.

10 Second I want to talk about the risks a
11 little bit more. A lot of these have been
12 touched on, but so we can get something in the
13 public record. I'm sorry if it's too repetitive.

14 But confining farming animals, whether you're
15 on the land or in the water, is a problem.
16 There's an increased risk when you cultivate
17 species and confine them. There is risk for
18 workers in surrounding environment and
19 communities and the ecosystem.

20 There's biohazards like disease and parasites
21 on land or in the water. These require
22 pharmaceuticals and other chemical compounds.
23 When you farm tens of thousands of animals, as is
24 proposed for this experiment, they require
25 feeding massive amounts and this produces massive

1 amounts of waste. When you place these
2 operations in open water the risks are
3 exacerbated.

4 Containment devices use heavy metals not
5 meant for water like copper, which reaches into
6 the environment and into water -- and it impacts
7 water quality. They also use antifoulants to
8 protect against marine environments. This
9 reaches into the water as well. We've heard
10 about antifoulants. These will increase the red
11 tide.

12 Fish escapes are commonplace in the industry.
13 Fish escapes happen all the time and often times
14 the entire brood stock within the net pen. And
15 these escapes can have a huge impact on the wild
16 stocks here in the Gulf. And there are also
17 marine mammals, seabirds, and other predatory
18 entanglements that are at risk.

19 These concerns barely scratch the surface.
20 There is a reason you have heard from so many who
21 are opposed to the farm. It may be a pilot
22 project, but it has the intention of seeking
23 commercial development in the Gulf of Mexico and
24 across the United States.

25 EPA has acknowledged that you're planning to

1 use the project to streamline permitting for
2 commercial operations. We're opposed to that.
3 We're opposed to the plan to commercially permit
4 this industry, especially when other countries
5 like Canada and Denmark have begun to phase it
6 out.

7 There's negative consequences and negative
8 experiences that we must learn from and the
9 United States is currently a leader because we
10 don't have these things in our water in
11 federal-controlled waterways. So we should keep
12 it that way and we urge you to please vote -- or
13 please deny the permit. Thank you.

14 JAN CONNERY: Do we have 48, somebody who is
15 48? Okay. 49. Good. And how about 50?
16 Excellent. All right. We'll be taking you guys
17 next.

18 JESSIKA ARMAN: Good evening. My name is
19 Jessika Arman and my parents brought me here
20 when I was 18 months old in 1971. I'm 50. I've
21 lived the majority of my years on this planet
22 here in Sarasota County.

23 I've watched with my own eyes what's happened
24 here. I don't need to read a book to see the
25 degradation. 2018 we had a red tide that

1 stretched all the way down from the Ten Thousand
2 Islands area all the way up to the Pan Handle.

3 And I just want to say this. I didn't
4 prepare anything today because, you know, God
5 gave us two ears and two eyes to watch and
6 listen, so I'm sorry that I'm kind of off the
7 cuff here.

8 But I have sent my child to camp here at Mote
9 and I've supported this organization, but today
10 that ends for me. You have a really bad
11 perception as reality problem, Mote. You're
12 holding an EPA hearing with a company that you're
13 going to go in business with. In the real world,
14 that's called a conflict of interest. Number
15 one. Okay.

16 Number two, I would love to give you a warm
17 Floridian aloha to this Hawaiian company, but
18 unfortunately I can't unless Mote has somehow
19 figured out to raise fingerlings that are red
20 tide resistant. Ha. I just have to laugh. It's
21 ridiculous.

22 Your fish are going to die out there. And
23 maybe the government has some backroom deal where
24 they will help replenish them and pay more.
25 Because guess what, Mote, people think you're a

1 quasi-governmental agency now with all the money
2 that you're getting. You have a big reality
3 perception problem.

4 I would like to lastly say that I just can't
5 believe this, that this is happening. I'm very
6 proud of all the people that showed up here
7 tonight. Okay? And I hope that there will be
8 some legal action taken.

9 I urge you, having also worked briefly in the
10 government and I will not read the 500 page
11 report that the gentleman asked us to. Rather,
12 I'll ask you to read chapters 14, 15, and 16 of
13 the book called The Gulf, which is a Pulitzer
14 Prize winning novel. And it discusses about all
15 the industrial pollution on our five Gulf states.

16 We're the only ones that don't have oil rigs
17 off of our Gulf, but they want them. They want
18 them. That's why the EPA just reduced -- you
19 know, the Clean Water Act got rolled back.
20 They're all in cahoots.

21 I have a friend who used to work at this
22 organization who tested fish after the Deepwater
23 Horizons, to this day still does it, there is oil
24 in all the livers of these fish, every single one
25 of them that she's tested.

1 So good luck with this fish farm. I'm so
2 opposed to it I'm shaking up here. I'm sorry.

3 But the government and companies have a big
4 tendency to take the same plan and reinstall it
5 somewhere, you know, like El Salvador and then
6 the Bay of Pigs. Well, it didn't work very well
7 in Cuba. So the point is, when they take plans
8 and reinstall them somewhere, you guys don't know
9 the Gulf. This is something called a continental
10 shelf. You can go out like miles upon miles and
11 it's not very deep.

12 The water, yes, the Gulf is the biggest Gulf
13 in the world, I don't know if people knew that,
14 but the water circulation doesn't go around.

15 Anyway, I strongly oppose this and I wish the
16 EPA would finally listen to the people because
17 people think you are the environmental pollution
18 agency these days.

19 JAN CONNERY: Number 48.

20 DORIN SUAREZ (phonetic): Good evening,
21 everybody. My name is Dorin Suarez. I'm a
22 resident, but I'm also an aquaculturist. I'm a
23 little afraid here.

24 I'm here to read a letter in support of this
25 project from my good friend and world authority,

1 Dr. Dan Benetti, a professor and director of
2 aquaculture at the University of Miami Rosenstiel
3 School of Marine and Atmospheric Science. I have
4 no relation to Kampachi Farms other than I know
5 them.

6 The U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization
7 has reported that more than 70 percent of the
8 world's fish species are overfished. There's no
9 more fish to go around even if we go out and fish
10 for it.

11 Human population continues to grow and wild
12 fisheries are collapsing as most stocks are being
13 depleted. Where are we going to get food from?
14 We need aquaculture. We need the information
15 from these projects.

16 The world is responding. Aquaculture is
17 currently already responsible for more than 50
18 percent of the fish and shellfish put on people's
19 dinner tables around the world. The offshore
20 areas of the United States have huge potential to
21 develop an environmentally-sustainable offshore
22 aquaculture industry.

23 We still have the opportunity to become the
24 world's leader in sustainable aquaculture
25 production. However, we are currently at risk of

1 losing our very important technological advances
2 to other countries that already see valuable
3 economic opportunities available in their waters.
4 Several of these countries are already doing it
5 while we're importing 80 percent or more of the
6 food we consume.

7 Dr. Benetti then goes on into his
8 credentials, which I don't have time to read but,
9 believe me, he's published hundreds of papers,
10 participated in numerous governmental and
11 international panels, and worked with
12 environmental NGOs, including the World Wildlife
13 Fund and Mote Marine Aquarium, in cases of
14 sustainability.

15 He goes on to say now is the time to let some
16 of the best technologies developed in America be
17 applied here at home. We have collectively
18 developed technology to produce high-quality
19 marine fish in ecologically-sustainable ways all
20 the way to market with no significant or
21 communicable impact on the environment. More
22 importantly, we have been and continue conducting
23 research addressing and resolving the
24 environmental concerns necessary to responsibly
25 develop offshore aquaculture in this country.

1 Proposed data have shown that ocean
2 aquaculture is the right path to develop a low
3 impact high industry that will produce much
4 needed seafood while creating jobs and other
5 socioeconomic benefits. Implementation of these
6 activities in the U.S. will allow entrepreneurs
7 to compete in an industry that is poised to
8 continue to grow at almost 10 percent per year
9 and is already being conducted in many foreign
10 countries. It will promote the -- I'm almost
11 done -- the growth of an economically viable
12 socially responsible and
13 environmentally-sustainable aquaculture.

14 Beyond economics, the importance of
15 developing the offshore aquaculture industry in
16 the U.S. is a matter of national security. We
17 must act now to keep offshore aquaculture within
18 U.S. waters to secure our autonomy in seafood
19 supply. The Kampachi Farms realize the proposed
20 initiative is an important step towards this
21 crucial goal. Thank you.

22 JAN CONNERY: Thank you. Number 49?

23 SANDRA VANSUCH: Hello. My name is Sandra
24 VanSuch and I'm a Sarasota resident. I'm a
25 parent and a small business owner.

1 Thank you for allowing me to speak. There
2 have been so many brilliant speakers here before
3 me. Most have discussed what I was here to say.
4 I'm not a Toastmaster or a public speaker.

5 I'm not comfortable talking, but we are at a
6 time when we have to step out of our comfort
7 zones. I speak for many parents and hard-working
8 residents who asked me to talk for them because
9 they could not be here.

10 I feel on overload with so many battles that
11 need fought. But if we do not have clean air and
12 water we do not have life. And our waters are
13 suffering. Our waters have no voice, we must be
14 it.

15 I'm terrified for the world that we are
16 passing on to our children. It used to be our
17 grandchildren I was worried about, but things are
18 getting bad at an alarming rate. The government
19 is doing a great job regulating all the other
20 areas of pollution in our country, aren't they?

21 This is an emotional topic for many of us.
22 Please show me your hand if you were here when we
23 had dead dolphins, dead manatees, dead fish, dead
24 seabirds, maggots in the sand lining our waters.
25 Thank you. Who can close their eyes and still

1 see these burned and etched and hurting into our
2 hearts and our souls? Who lived inland and
3 remembers walking outside even inland to smell a
4 stench that was choking from the red tide?

5 I keep hearing these speakers that are for it
6 that it will be minimal damage, minimalized harm.
7 None is acceptable.

8 Okay. Next. Who signed up to get the sewage
9 spill alerts? If you're not, you should be.
10 These are happening so frequently it's
11 horrifying. We're do many of these lead? To our
12 waters.

13 Who's aware of the amount of chemicals that
14 are unregulated, over 35 that are allowed to be
15 sprayed into our lakes and our ponds and our
16 waterways on a regular basis? Fish are showing
17 up with lesions and tumors.

18 Then we have Mosaic polluting our waters, big
19 sugar, Nestle trying to take the waters from our
20 springs. You get the point. Enough already.
21 Our waters are in need of healing, not more
22 potential pollutants. This is not the area for
23 an experiment.

24 I strongly oppose this. My friends that I'm
25 here speaking for because they could not be here

1 are strongly opposing this. Thank you for your
2 time.

3 JAN CONNERY: Thank you. Number 50. And do
4 we have 51? How about 52? Anyone with 52? It
5 jumps to 60. I guess we're up to 67. Do we have
6 67 in the room?

7 CARTER HENNE: Yes.

8 JAN CONNERY: Okay. So you're going to be
9 next. Do we have 68? Anybody 68? How about 69?
10 69. 69. Very good. So you will be next after
11 that.

12 CARTER HENNE: Well, thank you everyone for
13 sticking around to hear me talk. My name is
14 Carter Henne. I'm a multi-generational Florida,
15 a marine biologist, and an underwater farmer.

16 Originally -- I've been an underwater farmer
17 all my life. I originally started growing fish
18 for restoration and release into our estuaries
19 and now I grow sea grass, mangrove, coral, and
20 oysters for environmental restoration. I'm a
21 native of Polk County where Mosaic is from and
22 all the rest of the agriculture that comes down
23 into the estuaries.

24 I get to spend a lot of time -- there was a
25 time in my life where I spent years on end, 40

1 hours a week under water snorkeling, SCUBA
2 diving, looking at environmental restoration
3 projects, either plants, sea grass, or working
4 around in them.

5 I became an underwater farmer. Originally
6 started farming fish because I believe that fish,
7 aquaculture has the ability to lessen the impact
8 from overfishing.

9 I heard a couple times here that we want the
10 waters to heal and we just need to leave them
11 alone. The sad fact is that's not possible.
12 We're a couple pontoon boats shy of a million
13 boats, registered boats, in the state of Florida
14 this year.

15 Economic development, we're not slowing it
16 down. Lenar, Ryan, they're pummeling houses in
17 here. There's no time to let waters heal.

18 I believe in offshore aquaculture. Not so
19 much this project. I could care less. I've got
20 no financial interest. Don't care anything about
21 it.

22 What I am excited about this project though
23 is that it's in shallow water and it's a close
24 enough proximity to land to where there's regular
25 monitoring. And I could be crazy, but I still

1 believe that EPA does the best job that they can
2 with the information they get. They have got an
3 incredibly hard job managing a country with so
4 many different ideas.

5 Florida's the 17th largest economy in the
6 world and we got there by agriculture, tourism,
7 and industry. Aquaculture represents the
8 cleanest source of protein production, period.

9 So I think this is very similar to wind farms
10 where it kills many species of birds, and solar
11 panels which devastates huge swaths of land.
12 It's not the best out there, but it's something
13 that needs to be studied. And thank you for
14 doing such a good job on it.

15 JAN CONNERY: Thank you very much. So I
16 guess we're jumping down to 67.

17 DIANE DESEMBERG: My name is Diane Desenberg.
18 I'm a local resident, long time.

19 And I'm an ardent supporter of local
20 agriculture of all types. I grow a lot of my own
21 food. The idea of local aquaculture is a
22 wonderful idea to me, but to do it in a
23 nonpolluting way, I think that's a real key
24 issue.

25 And that's true with growing any food. If

1 you grow it locally and you spray pesticides on
2 it, what's the point of that. If you have an
3 aquaculture farm and then you put antibiotics all
4 over it, you're not really gaining anything
5 there.

6 I have visited what I would consider a very
7 sustainable oyster farm and the oysters in that
8 area actually clean the water. So it got rid of
9 nutrients. It actually made for a better place.

10 Why aren't we seeing a proposal for a farm
11 that cleans the water? That would be my
12 question. And why does the EPA -- I don't want
13 to see a pollution permit. I want to see a
14 project that cleans the water so we don't need a
15 pollution permit.

16 Also I think the point has been raised a few
17 times, but the big picture is lots of commercial
18 farms here. You're doing a permit for one pilot
19 project. That's meaningless. Your permitting
20 process, by law, has to look at the cumulative
21 impact and you're not doing that if you're only
22 looking at the pilot.

23 Lots of talk about red tide. I just also
24 want to point out that the fish that are raised
25 surrounding by red tide, somebody mentioned oil.

1 If you've got oil on your liver you've got red
2 tide in your surroundings, who is going to want
3 to eat this fish? That almost in and of itself
4 is a discharge to be concerned about.

5 And as far as antibiotics, I would say that
6 under no condition should we be dumping
7 antibiotics in the ocean. We have a huge problem
8 with antibiotic resistance. The EPA should not
9 be permitting any antibiotic dumping in the
10 ocean. That should be a nix on the whole permit
11 to begin with.

12 So, overall, I would just say we should be
13 looking for a project that has a positive impact
14 on our water, not a negative one. Thank you.

15 JAN CONNERY: Thank you very much. Number
16 68?

17 AUDIENCE MEMBER: 69.

18 JAN CONNERY: Oh, you're 69?

19 AUDIENCE MEMBER: There's no 68.

20 JAN CONNERY: Is there a 70? And I think at
21 70 we start to go to the alphabet. And we're
22 going to start with B because, I guess, A has
23 left already. Do we have somebody with a B in
24 the room to comment? How about a C? C left.
25 Just a B? D? E? F? G? H? Anyone got a

1 letter?

2 JEANEANNE GETTLE: How about if anyone else
3 is planning -- how about if we say if anyone is
4 planning to comment if you will just start to cue
5 up on the sides.

6 JAN CONNERY: Yeah, I think that's probably
7 where we're at so please do that. Thank you.

8 JEANEANNE GETTLE: And if you've commented
9 previously and you want to comment again and we
10 have time at the end we'll let you do that.

11 TIM THURMAN: Good evening. My name is Tim
12 Thurman. I'm an avid sailor, boater, fisherman.
13 I love the area, love the water.

14 Why here? Why now? Our Gulf is already
15 taking in approximately 40 percent of the
16 effluent in the United States. Think of all the
17 flooding in the heartlands last year. That has
18 brought millions of gallons of polluted runoff to
19 the Gulf.

20 Additionally, the Gulf is one of the largest
21 dead zones in the world, most recently it
22 measured between 6 to 7,000 square miles. Why
23 would we want to take the risk of adding to that.

24 There are already approximately 1,850
25 offshore oil platforms. While they may provide

1 fish habitat, they also add pollution to the
2 Gulf. One of the pollutants is mercury. Why
3 would be want to add to this.

4 The Gulf is surrounded by approximately 1,680
5 miles of coastline. These states include Florida
6 and Texas as the second and third most populous
7 states in the nation. Why would we want to do an
8 experiment here now. Why, when land-based
9 closed-loop systems do not threaten the Gulf
10 waters? Why now when the Gulf is Mexico is
11 already extremely stressed by the items I just
12 mentioned?

13 I strongly encourage you to not approve this
14 permit.

15 JAN CONNERY: Thank you. 67.

16 CRIS COSTELLO: I'll just hold it. Good
17 evening. My name is Cris Costello. I'm an
18 organizing manager for the Sierra Club. I'm
19 representing the National Sierra Club this
20 evening.

21 In order to not repeat what so many eloquent
22 people have stated, I'd like to bring the EPA's
23 attention to the work the State has been doing
24 over the past 13 or so years with regard to
25 nutrient pollution.

1 If you're not already aware, you should be
2 very aware that Sarasota County actually has
3 taken nutrient pollution very seriously. In 2007
4 it passed the first strong, strict urban
5 fertilizer ordinance because of our critically
6 important ecosystem, our tourist economy, and the
7 damage that had been wrought by red tide and
8 other algae blooms.

9 Sarasota wasn't the only one. It's an issue
10 that, if you're not aware, is the largest, the
11 biggest, the most aggressively-fought
12 environmental problem in the state, and that is
13 harmful algae, whether it's red tide,
14 cyanobacteria, et cetera.

15 Right now there are 13 counties that have
16 strong ordinances that follow in the example of
17 Sarasota County and there are over 90
18 municipalities. There isn't a county in the
19 state that isn't doing their best using their
20 resources to stop pollution at its source. That
21 means stop pollution on the land before it gets
22 into our receding water bodies and makes its way
23 to either the Gulf or the Atlantic.

24 This proposal is obviously completely
25 contrary to all of the work that the state has

1 been doing, the counties and the cities have been
2 doing for the past 13 years. Not to mention the
3 fact that Governor DeSantis early in -- in fact
4 before he even took office, his transition team
5 made it clear that his dedication was to stop
6 nutrient loading of our receiving water bodies
7 and in fact in the last year he has convened two
8 task forces, the harmful algal bloom red tide
9 task force and the blue-green algae task force,
10 whose time and effort and resources are being
11 spent to stop pollution at its source on the land
12 before it gets into our receiving water bodies.

13 This project, this Kampachi Farms project, is
14 the antithesis of the work that the State has
15 been doing aggressively over the past 13 years.
16 And I say 13 years because that's how long I've
17 been with the Sierra Club. I'm sure it predates
18 me. This is the antithesis of what the State
19 needs and in fact is contrary to the State's
20 desires and their work.

21 The EPA, I urge the EPA to pay attention to
22 the grave environmental damage that nutrient
23 pollution is doing, not only in the Gulf, but
24 everywhere around the State, and to make a
25 sensible decision to deny the permit. Thank you.

1 JEANEANNE GETTLE: I think we have somebody.
2 Are you wanting to speak?

3 JAN CONNERY: So we have someone. Yes,
4 please come on up.

5 Does anyone else have a number or letter that
6 we haven't gotten to yet? This is your time.

7 DORIN SUAREZ: So I get to inflict pain upon
8 you all twice tonight. Once on behalf of
9 Professor Benetti --

10 JEANEANNE GETTLE: That's fine. Do I have
11 anyone else in the audience that has not spoken
12 that wants to speak?

13 JAN CONNERY: He has spoken.

14 JEANEANNE GETTLE: I know that. I'm fine
15 with him speaking again.

16 I'm going to open it back up to people. If
17 you want to come back up and speak for another
18 three minutes I will let you do that.

19 JAN CONNERY: So if folks would like to
20 speak.

21 JEANEANNE GETTLE: You can come back to
22 speak.

23 JAN CONNERY: Why don't you come on up here
24 so we'll be aware of who they are. And we're
25 going to do it in three-minute increments?

1 JEANEANNE GETTLE: Three-minute increments.

2 JAN CONNERY: Okay. Just want to be clear
3 about that. Please go ahead, sir.

4 DORIN SUAREZ: Thank you. So this time it's
5 on my behalf, not on Professor Benetti's.

6 I'm a resident here with my family. I've
7 been in the aquaculture industry for about 37
8 years, 20 of those working on issues of
9 sustainability. Specifically issues of
10 sustainability.

11 I am not a cheerleader for aquaculture. I
12 recognize that there have been many mistakes made
13 in aquaculture. And aquaculture is a tool. It's
14 like a hammer. You can use a hammer to kill
15 somebody, you can use a hammer build a house to
16 live in peace. So it's just how you use it.

17 I recognize that this issue has become very
18 emotional and then they become belief. It's not
19 so much that people can't convince you, but I
20 urge all of you to look at the science. The
21 science in this is very clear.

22 And, by the way, I know everybody here comes
23 with good intentions. We all are
24 well-intentioned. I consider myself an
25 environmentalist.

1 Like I said, caged fish farming can be very
2 bad for the environment. If I have time here I
3 could speak for hours about examples of what I've
4 seen in Asia specifically. Also in Europe. But
5 I can also tell you that the U.S. has very good
6 laws and regulations, including those of the EPA,
7 and that they do protect us.

8 And I can also tell you that I know the
9 Kampachi folks. I'm not related to them, but I
10 know them. They are good people. They're real
11 people. They know what they're doing. They do
12 things correctly and legally.

13 And, by the way, when we buy 90 percent of
14 our seafood outside of the country, what we're
15 doing is we're exporting that environmental
16 footprint. We have to think in like one world.
17 We cannot think just like ourselves. By buying
18 this 90 percent we're exporting that same
19 environmental footprint elsewhere. Why don't we
20 do it here under our laws where we know it's done
21 correctly.

22 A couple really quick points. Fish hook.
23 Whether it's wild fish or farm fish, they hook
24 the same.

25 Other points. Assimilation versus dilution.

1 Everybody here's thinking that fish food and
2 nutrients just go there and they move with the
3 tide and they hit us. It's not like that. The
4 ocean has dozens of processes to clean this and
5 to detoxify it.

6 AUDIENCE MEMBER: Red tide is one of those.

7 DORIN SUAREZ: Red tide is, unfortunately,
8 one of them, but, you know, the scale of this
9 test -- and we need this information. We should
10 not be afraid of having the information. The
11 scale of this test is not even the rounding error
12 of 1 percent of what the real problem is, which
13 is agriculture and mining as far as red tide.
14 Thank you very much.

15 JAN CONNERY: Can you give us your name just
16 once more for the record.

17 DORIN SUAREZ: Certainly. Dorin Suarez.

18 JEANEANNE GETTLE: So let me just clarify for
19 the record what we're going to do now. The
20 public hearing will stay open until 9:30 when I
21 will close the public hearing. I will probably
22 close it around 9:25, 9:30. And so if there are
23 people in the room that have spoken and or have
24 not spoken and you would like to speak between
25 now and 9:25, then we will do it at three-minute

1 intervals until no one else wants to speak, at
2 which time I will keep the hearing open until
3 9:30.

4 So just to clarify what I'm doing. So that
5 is why I'm letting people speak again if you are
6 here and you would like to speak. And what I
7 would ask is that you would cue up over here. It
8 will be in three-minute intervals. And the same
9 process applies, please state your name for the
10 record and then give us your comments.

11 JAN CONNERY: Okay. Looks like we've got
12 some folks cued up. And feel free to come up at
13 any time.

14 JEANEANNE GETTLE: I do want to also clarify
15 is someone comes in who has not spoken I will let
16 them speak first.

17 MARGARET JEAN CANNON: Sounds fine. Once
18 again, my name is Margaret Jean Cannon. Just a
19 few things. There are two comments.

20 I know we heard about climate change. We
21 know our Gulf waters have gotten warmer, so I
22 just want to point that out. And that has been a
23 real problem is the fact that that's one of the
24 reasons we get more of the red tide is because of
25 the warmer waters. So this is a big problem in

1 our future.

2 The other thing that I wanted to bring up, in
3 my mind I often thought about this, is the
4 Shakespeare the play, The Merchant of Venice,
5 when Portia asks or tells him he can take a pound
6 of flesh, but not one drop of blood. They can
7 take some of that water, but not one drop of my
8 water.

9 So I'm tired of seeing people take our
10 resources and use them and, again, with the idea
11 that they're going to improve our environment or
12 improve our lives by providing us fish from here
13 when we ship 70 percent of our fish out of the
14 country. So I think we need to take care of
15 ourselves and we do our fish through the normal
16 aquaculture farming that we have. So thank you
17 very much.

18 JAN CONNERY: Thank you very much.

19 KATHY BENZ: Thank you very much. Again, my
20 name is Kathy Benz. I'm the president of
21 Sarasota County Council of Neighborhood
22 Associations, and I appreciate the opportunity to
23 have a little bit more of the research that I've
24 done made public.

25 In natural conditions the subject species of

1 this project feeds throughout day and night as
2 they circulate widely. Surely, their natural
3 feeding cycle will be broken. Imposing
4 artificial regulated feeding would disrupt their
5 natural behavior, metabolism, and health.
6 They're a carnivore and a predator. They are not
7 an animal that eats vegetation.

8 Feeding them a vegetarian diet would not
9 provide them with proper nutrition and it would
10 not then be passed on to those of us that consume
11 it. If you try to feed them animal protein you
12 wind up with even worse issues because then
13 you're decimating other species, either locally
14 or distant, through captivist food or by their
15 own food source being harvested to feed a herd,
16 leaving the native fish to starve.

17 Concentration of this wide-ranging species
18 that normally lives in fast-moving small groups
19 through varying location into stationary pens
20 will lead to unnatural behavior, parasites,
21 disease, and stress. They may even turn on one
22 another in order to get the proteins that they
23 want throughout the day.

24 They also will be denied contact with the
25 species that helped them maintain their health.

1 For instance, they're highly subject to skin
2 parasites and in nature the way they rid
3 themselves of those skin parasites is by rubbing
4 up against sharks going by them because the rough
5 skin of the sharks removes the parasites. So
6 these fish are never going to have an opportunity
7 to lose their parasites, so medication is going
8 to have to be put into the water to try to kill
9 those parasites along with the antibiotics and
10 everything else.

11 So anyway, the shallow volume of the Gulf is
12 a live environment. It has species living there.
13 We are going to endanger them.

14 One of the things that's most important if
15 we're going to have aquaculture what we need to
16 do is shellfish our aquaculture. It would at
17 least purify our water. It would not contaminate
18 it. This is what we should be promoting, not
19 finfish aquaculture. Thank you.

20 JOSEPH DAVIS: This is my second time around
21 and I'll make it brief, but I do think that one
22 thing needs to be said.

23 JAN CONNERY: Give us your name.

24 JOSEPH DAVIS: Joseph Davis. I'm sorry. A
25 couple things need to be said.

1 This idea of not in my back yard, not never
2 here is just ridiculous. You have to deal with
3 issues as they occur.

4 It's not a matter -- it's like homelessness.
5 Everybody wants to do away with the homeless,
6 they want to help the homeless, but we don't want
7 a shelter in our back yard.

8 Want us to eat shellfish instead of finfish.
9 Well, people want to eat finfish. There are a
10 lot of people, just look around in here, they're
11 never going to eat those oysters. You could
12 produce a ton of them, they aren't going to eat
13 them. They may eat a few muscles.

14 You can't substitute what you think people
15 ought to do because it makes the water cleaner
16 for what people want. So what you have to do is
17 deal with the reality.

18 And it's totally unfair to characterize Mote
19 Marine, who is a pillar of this community and who
20 does great work in restoring coral and restocking
21 fish in this neighborhood, to cast them as
22 nothing more than a financial partner with a
23 commercial fish farm, they're a lot more than
24 that. They're a resource for this community that
25 has contributed a lot and continues to contribute

1 a lot. It is grossly unfair to throw them under
2 that bus.

3 It's also grossly unfair to blame the EPA for
4 the fact that they have to consider a fish
5 farming permit. People say, well, you shouldn't
6 even consider that. EPA doesn't have a choice in
7 what they consider. I'm a lawyer. I was a
8 federal lawyer for years.

9 EPA operates under laws and regulations. If
10 somebody wants to do something, they can't tell
11 them, you shouldn't do that. That's not ethical.
12 The only they can do is apply the laws and the
13 regulations that they have. And that's exactly
14 what they're doing here. They're trying to be an
15 evenhanded application of these laws.

16 Now, you may disagree with those facts, you
17 may disagree with their science, you may disagree
18 with their opinions and, believe me, I'm as upset
19 as anyone else about the efforts of the current
20 Administration to weaken environmental
21 protection, this is not that. This has been
22 going on for years and it is a straight-up effort
23 to assess the environmental damage and we ought
24 to look at it in that way.

25 The gentleman who said he was an underwater

1 fish farmer, he spoke the truth. The truth is
2 you're not going to be able to just leave it
3 alone. If you leave it alone, we're going to
4 harvest more wild fish, we're going to
5 overharvest more. Continued pressure to do that.

6 That's not helping the sport fisherman.
7 That's not helping the wild fish industry. It's
8 just a head-in-the-sand approach. We have to do
9 something.

10 And so why don't we do a pilot project that
11 tells us whether it works or not. We can stop it
12 if it doesn't work. You can stop it midstream
13 even. EPA has the authority to reconsider. If
14 they don't, it doesn't mean if this project is a
15 success that a large-scale project is going to be
16 approved automatically. Have to go through the
17 same process all over again.

18 If you don't like that, that's the time to
19 object to that, not to object to an experimental
20 pilot project that is really designed to collect
21 data to help the government and scientists and
22 Mote and others assess the impact.

23 TOM BARWIN: Good evening. My name is Tom
24 Barwin. I'm the city manager for the City of
25 Sarasota.

1 I attended tonight to listen to the comments
2 and I'd just like to compliment the EPA and
3 welcome you here and thank you for listening to
4 the comments of our region's public tonight. I
5 think you've done a wonderful job organizing the
6 public hearing.

7 Our policy makers have just recently heard
8 about this subject. Cleaning up the Gulf and
9 restoring it as aggressively as we can is a huge
10 public policy issue, obviously for the region,
11 certainly for the city commission here in the
12 City of Sarasota. So I will brief them on what
13 we heard tonight and I would respectfully request
14 a copy of the minutes as soon as we can get them.
15 Do you have any idea when that might happen? I
16 know there's been a lot of commentary tonight.

17 JEANEANNE GETTLE: I'm sorry. I don't know,
18 but once we determine that I will let you know.

19 TOM BARWIN: Thank you. You have my e-mail,
20 so whenever you can get anything to me, we would
21 appreciate it. And also thank you for all the
22 public who came out to comment and really share a
23 lot of really helpful and interesting knowledge
24 tonight. Thank you.

25 RACHAEL CURRAN: Rachael Curran, staff

1 attorney, Center for Biological Diversity. This
2 is my second time up here.

3 Just really wanted to quickly address some
4 sort of mischaracterization of the general
5 opposition to this farm being that it's based on
6 emotion and not science.

7 Our particular complaint with the
8 Environmental Review thus far is that it does not
9 take into account the best available science.
10 For instance, that draft Environmental Assessment
11 cites the intergovernmental panel on climate
12 change's third and fourth assessment, failing to
13 even consider the 2019 special report on oceans
14 and climate change and the climate change
15 expected impacts on ocean currents, the very
16 ocean currents that are being relied upon to say
17 these will not carry red tide to shore or feed
18 red tide in anyway.

19 We will be submitting extensive supplemental
20 comments by the February 4th deadline. I hope
21 that all that science is taken into account, but
22 our primary complaint is not on the basis of
23 emotion, it is certainly based on the inadequate
24 analysis of the best available science in this
25 Environmental Review and the fact that an

1 Environmental Impact Statement has not been
2 completed for a project with this significant
3 impact. Thank you.

4 JAN CONNERY: Thanks so much.

5 JEANEANNE GETTLE: So do we have anyone else
6 in the room that wants to comment at this time?

7 Okay. So this hearing will remain open until
8 9:30. I will remain here. We will remain in the
9 room. We will take additional comments if
10 someone comes in and wants to provide comments.

11 If any of you decide you want to provide
12 comments, if you let us know, we'll simply be
13 sitting up here and we'll take those comments at
14 that time.

15 I want to remind everyone as you are sitting
16 here or leaving that our comment period is open
17 until February 4th. We will accept written
18 comments. And I encourage you to pick up a fact
19 sheet. It gives you the way to submit those
20 written comments.

21 So we will just remain here pending any
22 further comments.

23 (Off the record from 8:57 p.m. to 9:20 p.m.)

24 JEANEANNE GETTLE: So we are back on the
25 record so that I can close out the hearing. And

1 I guess I will just say thank you to all of you
2 that assisted us with the hearing because I think
3 that's all the people that we have left. And so
4 we're going to go ahead and close out the
5 hearing.

6 We are extending our public comment period
7 through February 4, 2020. EPA will review and
8 consider all comments received during the public
9 comment period in both writing and at today's
10 public hearing. EPA will prepare a document
11 known as Response to Comments and will briefly
12 describe and address significant issues raised
13 during the comment period and what provisions, if
14 any, in the draft permit have been changed and
15 the reasons for the change.

16 A notice of availability of the final NPDES
17 permit decision and the Response to Comments will
18 be published in the Sarasota Herald Tribune once
19 a final permit decision has been made. In
20 addition, the notice of availability, the
21 Response to Comments, and the final permit
22 decision will be mailed and e-mailed to everyone
23 that commented about the draft permit for which
24 EPA has a mailing or e-mail address. The
25 complete final permit decision and the Response

1 to Comments will be available on the EPA website
2 as well.

3 Additional information regarding these
4 procedures is available by contacting Mr. Kip
5 Tyler at (404) 562-9294.

6 Again, I thank you for your participation.
7 If you have any questions or comments you can
8 always reach EPA in the ways listed in the
9 handout that we have made available. This
10 hearing is adjourned.

11 (Hearing adjourned at 9:22 p.m.)

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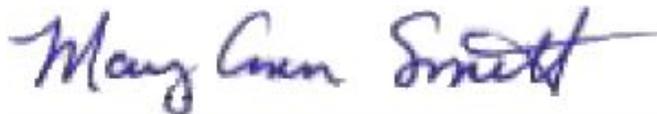
CERTIFICATE OF REPORTER

STATE OF FLORIDA)
COUNTY OF MANATEE)

I, Mary Ann Smith, Registered Professional Reporter, Registered Merit Reporter, do hereby certify that I was authorized to and did report the foregoing proceedings; and that the transcript, pages 1 through 160, is a true record of the proceedings.

I further certify that I am not a relative, employee, attorney, or counsel for any of the parties, nor am I a relative or employee of any of the parties' attorney or counsel connected with the action, nor am I financially interested in the action.

DATED this 18th day of February, 2020.



Mary Ann Smith, RPR, RMR

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Federal Rules of Civil Procedure

Rule 30

(e) Review By the Witness; Changes.

(1) Review; Statement of Changes. On request by the deponent or a party before the deposition is completed, the deponent must be allowed 30 days after being notified by the officer that the transcript or recording is available in which:

(A) to review the transcript or recording; and

(B) if there are changes in form or substance, to sign a statement listing the changes and the reasons for making them.

(2) Changes Indicated in the Officer's Certificate.

The officer must note in the certificate prescribed by Rule 30(f)(1) whether a review was requested and, if so, must attach any changes the deponent makes during the 30-day period.

DISCLAIMER: THE FOREGOING FEDERAL PROCEDURE RULES ARE PROVIDED FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES ONLY.

THE ABOVE RULES ARE CURRENT AS OF APRIL 1, 2019. PLEASE REFER TO THE APPLICABLE FEDERAL RULES OF CIVIL PROCEDURE FOR UP-TO-DATE INFORMATION.

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COMPANY CERTIFICATE AND DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

Veritext Legal Solutions represents that the foregoing transcript is a true, correct and complete transcript of the colloquies, questions and answers as submitted by the court reporter. Veritext Legal Solutions further represents that the attached exhibits, if any, are true, correct and complete documents as submitted by the court reporter and/or attorneys in relation to this deposition and that the documents were processed in accordance with our litigation support and production standards.

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