

Dear Mr. Ronnie Leblanc

I am writing to you as a concerned citizen of East Ferry, Digby Neck, Nova Scotia.

I grew up in the area and have always lived and worked here. Growing up my father often took us hiking along the shore to relax, look out over the bay and just quietly absorb the beauty and fresh air. As an adult I have always enjoyed the natural beauty of the Digby Neck and retreated to the beach to clear my mind and feel at peace. Anyone who has ever been to the Digby Neck and Islands area understands what I'm talking about. Tourists come in droves over the summer for whale watching tours, hiking, beaches and seafood. A few people love it so much they buy homes and retire to the area to be surrounded by pristine waters and pollution free air, expecting to dine on fresh seafood.

Many families in our small area own small businesses consisting of lobster fishing boats holding various types of fishing licenses, employing a minimum of three up to five people at each small company. These people buy houses, have families and buy their vehicles and supplies in the closest town of Digby, all contributing to the tax base for the municipality as well as providing income to businesses in the area.

Sadly it has come to my attention that a large company named Cermaq is working through an Option to Lease application with Nova Scotia Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture.

It is very easy to find information about this company once one is aware they have actually applied for the option to lease. This company is in the newspapers and news casts on television and online almost weekly, as their salmon farms seem to be having a lot of problems with diseases, effluent build up, sea lice, ice physically destroying pens, water temperatures being too high and also too low, algae blooms, adding antibiotics to the ocean, adding pesticides to the ocean and basically providing a questionable food product as an end result. I am not a scientist but I do read the news. I'm hoping you do as well.

If you do read these articles then you can easily see why I and many of my friends and family are absolutely horrified that the Nova Scotia government at any level would ever consider entering such an unhealthy type of business into our pristine waters.

I'm writing to you today to ask you to please represent the local people of Nova Scotia and please say no to Open Pen Fish Farms.

I will be eagerly awaiting your response,

Melissa Merritt