

# Will Maine land-based salmon farms be stymied by residents, politicians?

A nonprofit opposed to the project says it is not against finfish aquaculture, in general.

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Nordic Aquafarms is [looking to consolidate its waste discharge applications](#) with the state of Maine as it moves forward to build one of the world's largest land-based salmon farms in the rural Maine city of Belfast. Erik Heim, the US CEO of Norway-based Nordic Aquafarms, the company behind the project, told **IntraFish** the company has been looking for ways to simplify the application process amidst ongoing opposition.

Public opposition to the project has been a regular occurrence in Maine for Heim since city and state officials announced the project last January. Linda Buckmaster, who helps run a local nonprofit known as Citizens for SMART Growth: Salmon Farm, told **IntraFish** residents in Belfast are not opposed to finfish aquaculture or even to salmon farming in particular. "We are concerned about the massive size of this project using an emerging technology by an inexperienced startup company," she said. Last year the group [helped fund a lawsuit filed against the city](#), claiming the city violated zoning regulations, and had not adequately involved them in the planning phase.

She noted the nonprofit is also concerned about the cumulative effects from a separate nearby land-based project being headed by Whole Oceans in the Maine town of Bucksport, and how the two projects plan to use water from Penobscot Bay. While Whole Oceans has avoided much of the public scrutiny aimed at Nordic Aquafarms, a Belfast resident recently challenged Whole Ocean's wastewater permit, an appeal that was rejected by the state's Board of Environmental Protection for having no standing, [the Bangor Daily Newsreports](#).

And that scrutiny could be amplified across the state this year, as there are, so far, three laws concerning land-based aquaculture being proposed for Maine's legislative session. Jennifer Fortier, an outreach and development associate with Whole Oceans, told **IntraFish** the company plans to tackle misinformation about aquaculture seafood products through continuous education and transparency.

"Our dedication to product quality, consistency and taste will dispel many unwarranted stigmas," she said. "In addition, Whole Oceans will educate and inform customers and consumers about its production methods, water parameters, feed components and sources, sustainability metrics, and most importantly, its fish quality." She said the company is also working to educate US consumers that they already eat farmed salmon, with 99 percent of Atlantic salmon consumed in the US being farm-raised.

"Local and regional outreach programs will further normalize the consumption of farm raised salmon and cement the position of fish grown in land-based recirculating systems in the class of premium seafood," she said. "We will also be inviting educators, students, regulators and members of the press to tour our operating facility, as they are all key parts to our future success."