

# FOOD FOR THOUGHT:

As the Board of Environmental Protection pores over Nordic Aquafarms' mammoth permit application, here are a few items closer to home to ponder.

Opponents of the fish farm claim it is too big, owned by a foreign company, is lacking in transparency and doesn't fit in beautiful Belfast.

Consider this: About a mile as the crow flies from the Little River dam is the Ducktrap River Fish Farm, producer of smoked salmon and other delicacies for more than 40 years. It is a big place with a recent \$5 million expansion, is owned by a Norwegian company, hasn't bothered anyone since it's been here, employs twice as many people as Nordic will even when it's fully operational, and fits just as nicely here as thin-sliced salmon in a transparent plastic sheath.

Speaking of transparency, information about the Nordic project is voluminously available on the city's website. Never have the details of an industrial project in Belfast been so open to the public.

For a couple of months now, opponents have hung their hat on some 60-year-old deeds that may or may not work in their favor. Discovery of the deeds came late in the permit process and were as a surprise to the purported "owners" of the Little River intertidal zone. But aside from that distraction, the process has moved forward just as one might expect in the lively community of Belfast. It's taken time and money to get this far, but that's just a peanut in the big can of the finished farm.

One more thing. Opponents think the majority of Belfastians regard the project as they do, but we believe they're wrong. That's not just based on the November elections, when supporters won seats on the council, not the naysayers. Belfast has always been a working city, and economic development has always been a popular goal. Unless the BEP tells us something different in their review, the fish farm has a place here, both physically and in the hearts of residents. And soon, the latest feather in the city's cap will be placed right beside the shipyard, athenahealth and the Belfast Co-op.

*Paid by tax payers. We are going in the right direction.*