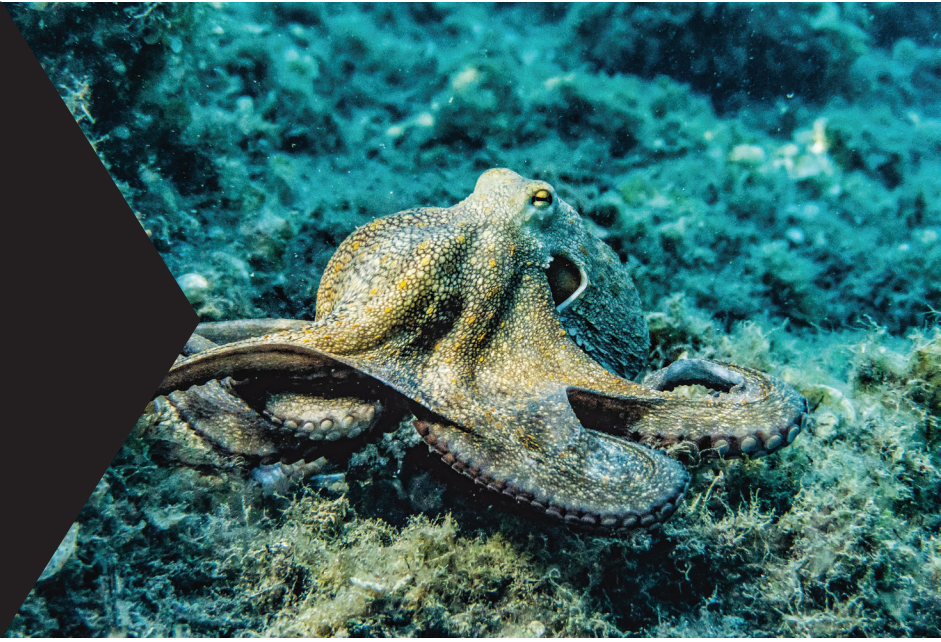


THE DANGERS OF OCTOPUS FARMING

BILL # HB1153



Governments and businesses in Spain, New Zealand, Australia, Mexico, China, Japan, and other countries are currently conducting octopus farming experiments. Spanish company Nueva Pescanova plans to be the first company in the world to operate an octopus farm, scheduled to open in Los Palmas, Canary Islands in 2023. The Washington state legislature would be the global pioneer in passing legislation to outlaw octopus farming.

A 2021 report by researchers with the London School of Economics pored over 300 studies and concluded that octopuses are sentient creatures, thus prompting the UK government to recently recognize their sentience in law. The LSE report found that "high-welfare octopus farming is impossible" and suggested that the UK consider a pre-emptive ban on octopus farming.

Most of the few hundred known octopus species seem to be largely asocial creatures in the wild, with their own territories, and intensive farming practices would cruelly force these animals into confined spaces with many other octopuses.

Octopuses are highly intelligent, curious, problem-solving animals who 'exhibit cognitive and behavioral complexity, and they appear capable of pain and suffering' (Issues in Science and Technology, 'The Case Against Octopus Farming, Winter 2019). They will not get the stimulation and rich interactions with the

environment provided by wild habitats in intensive, barren farms, as evidenced by countless examples in aquatic and terrestrial animal agriculture.

Octopuses are carnivorous invertebrates who require 3x their weight in feed for sustenance. This means that 'fishmeal' fisheries, many of which are already declining due to rampant overfishing, will need to be further plundered of their small fishes to feed farmed octopuses. Proponents of octopus farming will say that octopus aquaculture would take the pressure off of global wild octopus fisheries, many of which are in decline, but in reality, the need for large quantities of fish to feed industrially-farmed octopuses could help to further drive rapid losses in marine biodiversity.

High likelihood of stress, aggressive activity, and harmful behavior amongst octopuses in these settings due to confinement in highly unnatural habitats.

As evidenced by the popularity of the Academy Award-winning Netflix documentary 'My Octopus Teacher' and the Sy Montgomery book, 'Soul of an Octopus: A Surprising Exploration into the Wonder of Consciousness,' Washingtonians and others care about octopuses and don't want to see them confined and then killed.



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