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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE FEBRUARY 7, 2022

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WILLIAMS COUNTY SALMON “FARM” MODEL HAS SHOCKING RECORD
Atlantic Sapphire Company teeters on insolvency

Industry trade publications reveal that the model for a Williams County salmon factory “farm” has suffered major technical and financial setbacks including a fire, multiple fish kills and a precipitous tumble on the stock market.

Backers of the proposed Aquabounty facility near Bryan, Ohio, **including the Toledo Port Authority which last week approved \$300,000,000 in bond financing**, will find a cautionary tale in the record of Denmark’s Atlantic Sapphire Company which owns the first giant land-based fish factory in the U.S., located in Homestead, Florida.

Mike Ferner, coordinator of [Lake Erie Advocates](#) said “Our initial concern was seeing the Toledo Port Authority finance a project that will add significantly to the excess Phosphorus and Nitrogen in Lake Erie that causes toxic algal blooms every summer. Now we learn that the Atlantic Sapphire Company’s stunningly bad track record should be real cause for investor alarm”

“Our way of life is causing intolerable stresses on every system we depend on to survive. Earth is telling us it can no longer absorb what we are doing to it and that [a change is gonna come](#),” said Sherry Fleming, chair of the [Williams County Alliance](#), the citizen group opposing the project. “Even investors need to take note of this one.”

In September, 2021 the trade journal, Aquaculture North America summed up the Florida facility’s brief history by saying, “The bad news...just keeps piling up like [a slow-motion train wreck](#),” including several “catastrophic fish losses” and a fire on September 15 of last year that gutted the Danish pilot plant, killing all fish and **wiping out roughly 25 per cent of the company’s listed market value.**”

As this morning, the [Oslo Stock Exchange](#) pegged Atlantic Sapphire’s stock price at \$4.45 per share, a **74% drop from a year earlier.**

Atlantic Sapphire Company's Florida operation initially planned to produce 9,500 tons of fish per year, increasing that to 222,000 tons by 2031, [enough to provide 41% of current US annual salmon consumption](#), or a billion meals. But its "slow-motion train wreck" has instead resulted in

- High Nitrogen levels in March, 2020, that killed [227,000 salmon](#) at Atlantic Sapphire's pilot factory in Denmark.
- In Florida on July 28, 2020, "[disruptive construction work](#)...including loud sounds and severe vibrations," stressed the fish, causing 400 tons of salmon to be prematurely "harvested" at a quarter of their mature weight.
- A March 23, 2021 design flaw at the Florida factory disrupted the flow of water, causing excessive turbidity and gases which [killed 500 tons](#) or about half a million salmon.
- On April, 13, 2021 [CBS Miami](#) reported three workers were hospitalized in serious condition after being overcome by fumes when doing maintenance in one of the fish tanks.
- SeaWestnews.com reported in August, 2021, that Atlantic Sapphire Co.'s Florida operation was "[gasping for air – literally – as it feared running out of oxygen](#)" with hospitals buying up available supplies to treat Covid-19 patients, causing the company to reportedly consider switching to raising rainbow trout to shorten the production cycle. That same report said the technology to replace ocean-based salmon farms is "years away" and quoted a veteran fish farmer saying, "The people behind the mega land-based farms are mostly about raising money, not raising fish."

Fleming said her group is asking people to send comments to the Ohio Department of Natural Resources before February 22, 2022, the end of a 30-day comment period. No public hearing is scheduled but should be demanded of the ODNR. Write to ohiodnr.gov/aquabountywipp, or by mail to Bradley Lodge, 2045 Morse Road, Building B-3, Columbus, OH 43229.

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