



Good afternoon,

My name is Fiona de Koning. My husband Theo and I have a mussel aquaculture company in Bar Harbor called Acadia Aqua Farms.

I stand before you in favor of LD 699----“ an act to create a spat collection license.”

Theo is a fifth generation mussel farmer, originally from the Netherlands. We moved our family here ten years ago to start a bottom culture mussel farm. Theo was part of a national think tank back in Holland working on ways to improve seed recruitment.

Spat collection needs to be managed by the DMR as part of an integrated and adaptable management strategy. This will allow for the necessary long term investment in aquaculture companies.

Seed availability is obviously crucial to any farming activity and all methods for eliminating fluctuations in this availability, helps growers to compete in the market place. The high end market demands constant high quality and excellent reliability of supply. To support commercial success, and therefore grow and increase employment opportunities, and to build on the high quality image of the Maine brand, we need to focus on seed recruitment and management.

Growers are professionals who take their roles as stewards of both the social and ecological environment very seriously; this is both a moral obligation and a matter of good business sense. I am sure that all present today understand the importance of good regulation and the first step toward good



regulation is giving the Commissioner the authority to manage this activity. From here we expect and appreciate the opportunity as growers, to work with the department to develop good spat collection regulations. A broad base of input is vital to ensure that no unintended consequences are a result of any regulation developed. The end result should be a set of regulations that hold license holders to the same high standards, while supporting opportunity for commercial success.

Long term strategic planning is the way forward here and we are excited to surf with the aquaculture wave of success. Our son, who graduated with an engineering degree from U Maine has chosen to stay in the State and is working full time with us. So it is now six generations....and counting.

Thank you all for the time you dedicate to serving on this committee and thank you for this opportunity to speak today.

Fiona de Koning.

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