

03/01/19

Sen. Jim Dill, Rep. Craig Hickman and Distinguished Members of the Committee on Agriculture Conservation and Forestry,

My name is Captain Julie Eaton and I am a lobsterman from Deer Isle, Maine with 33 years of experience earning my living from the Ocean. I am here today to testify on L.D. 620- An Act Regarding Licensing of Land-based Aquaculture Facilities. I am in favor of this bill.

The Maine lobstering industry is a major contributor to the economic well-being of our great State. We create a lot of good paying jobs both on the water and ashore, draw many tourists to the coast to see our boats and eat our products and pay our fair share in taxes every year.

It is imperative that we can continue to keep our industry pure and free from invasive species. To introduce a species that might carry a pathogen our lobsters have never seen, could be a nightmare to us!

It is of utmost importance that the Department of Marine Resources, be a part of any decisions that could affect our industry and great care and thoughtful deliberation be given to any species raised in Maine by means of Aquaculture. For example, and this IS only an example, a land-based Salmon farm is willing to sell salmon racks (the part of the salmon left after the fillets are removed) to the lobstermen for bait. Sounds perfect. It sounds like it might help with the pending bait shortage our lobstermen are facing this year. However, if the Salmon have been fed some form of antibiotic or growth hormone that is harmful to our lobsters and we use the racks for bait, the lobsters eat the bait and get sick, get a shell disease, there is a major die off or this chemical is tested for and found in our lobsters making them no longer

all natural, everything we have worked so hard for and sacrificed so much for, will be lost. The Department of Marine Resources is very cautious about what species is introduced in Maine as can be attested too by the on-going studies of Asian Carp as a possible bait source of bait for us to use.

We have a sustainable industry and want to keep and protect that industry for future generations. For us, fishing isn't just a job- it isn't simply what we do but rather who we are, who are Fathers and Grandfathers were and who our Children and Grandchildren will become.

I appreciate the Aquaculture industry in Maine and have several friends who are now farming scallops and mussels on properly leased areas from the Department of Marine Resources. These species are native to our waters and have been carefully tested to insure their safe entry into our ocean.

I want to thank the Sponsor and the committee for their consideration of this very important issue.

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