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February 27, 2019

Testimony of Rep. Janice Dodge presenting

LD 620, An Act Regarding Licensing of Land Based Aquaculture Facilities
Before the Joint Standing Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry

Senator Dill, Representative Hickman and esteemed members of the Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry Committee. I am Representative Jan Dodge of House District 97, and I represent Belfast, Northport and Waldo. I am here today to present **LD 620, An Act Regarding Licensing of Land Based Aquaculture Facilities**.

Two of the towns I represent, Belfast and Northport, have shoreline on Penobscot Bay. Currently, two land based aquaculture factories are in the permitting process to operate on that bay; one in Belfast and another in Bucksport.

Many coastal landowners and citizens throughout the area are hoping you will recognize the need to view Maine's bays and harbors as interconnected entities. Due to the properties of water and the behavior of substances suspended in it, what is introduced in one area of our bay affects other areas due to tides, currents and the movement of marine species.

LD 620 asks the Commissioner of Marine Resources and/or the Commissioner of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife to inform the Commissioner of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry of any risks posed by one or more land based aquaculture facilities and their chemical or biological effluents. In their reporting, the commissioners will consider accidental or intentional introduction of marine or freshwater organisms or organism products into the State's bodies of water and the risk of introduction or spread of disease within the State.

Since the Federal Department of Environmental Protection monitors only some of the chemicals and bio-chemicals that exit each land based aquaculture facility, it is crucial for our state agencies to evaluate the additional impacts of our land-based aquaculture facilities including large single fish farms and multiple fish farms that emit these substances.

It is clear there is a need for local vigilance in requiring protections. Based on the fact that the federal environmental standards could be potentially detrimental to Maine and its waters, and that land based aquaculture is a new industry, only further demonstrates that stringent standards and intense monitoring are reasonable items to include in legislation.

On behalf of residents who live all around Penobscot Bay and along the coastline of the State of Maine, I request that your committee find it appropriate to support the careful monitoring, quantifying, evaluating and reporting of chemicals and bio-chemicals in land based aquaculture facilities. Many of our State's residents live near the coast and their livelihoods depend on the overall health and beauty of our waterfronts, in one way or another. Your actions will protect human health, the health of species managed by the state, federal and interstate agencies and protect those who depend on a vibrant coastal ecosystem to make a living!

I respectfully request that you defer any specific questions regarding marine biology or chemistry to a testifier with appropriate credentials, your committee experts or your committee analyst, please. Otherwise, I am happy to address them.