

Friend of Penobscot Bay  
People who care about Maine's biggest bay.  
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Testimony on LD 620 "An Act Regarding Licensing of Land-based Aquaculture Facilities" 2/28/19

Senator Dill, Representative Hickman and members of the Agriculture Conservation and Forestry Committee

My name is Ron Huber and I am executive director of Friends of Penobscot Bay. Waterkeeper Alliance affiliate. Every waterkeeper organization is different My job is assisting the bay's feisty ad hoc grassroots groups that rise up to respond to local bay-threatening proposals. They take it on, then dissolve their organizations, once the govt decision is made and their mission is accomplished.

I empower these vital temporary organizations; getting them familiar with the relevant regulators & laws etc, then bow out.

But lets get to LD 620.

620 will fill a critical gap in DACF's regulation of Land based salmon aquaculture.

\* Dept of Agriculture Conservation and Forestry is new to land based salmon farming. It has a weak existing law 7 MRSA §1501. "Land-based Aquaculture license" and zero regulations to manage this form of industrial agriculture.

Yet the agency is reviewing applications for licenses to build and operate two of what would be North America's largest salmon tankfarms, with its flimsy one page statute, and its non existent rules of its agency overseers.

*Maine needs to create the necessary structure of law and rules that protects the existing ecology first and consider applications later.*

\* Otherwise i Nordic and Whole Oceans do reach their goals, there's a strong likelihood of a gold rush for permits that would be grandfathered in under the present weak law to build and operate these up and down our bay and river.

\* That is what happened in the beginning of Maine's water-based salmon fishpen aquaculture industry: too many salmon farms licensed too close to each other in too many environmentally sketchy areas.

RESULT pollution, lice infestations and disease. A mess, Pesticides dumped into the fish pens. It took many years to strengthen Maine's weak fishpen salmon aquaculture laws once the industry was well underway.

Let's not repeat that mistake!

THE WEAKNESS THAT LD 620 WILL SOLVE:

DEP & DMR have the authority to consider cumulative impacts but don't . DACF needs to make them do it

The unnatural concentrations of pheromones, kairomones and other salmon biochemicals these fish emit concentrated from tens of thousands of salmon at once into single outfalls goes unexamined

They have the authority. But they don't do it

\* Yet these biochemicals are well documented to affect wild salmon. Some of them trigger a homing response in salmon parasites. If these creatures concentrate in the upper bay, they could injure or kill many of the wild salmon smolts transiting the upper bay enroute to the Gulf of Maine.

\* Since DEP & DMR act as if every project was in its own universe. it is important that the Department of Agriculture Conservation and Forestry be empowered to require DEP & DMR to examine and evaluate the above "cumulative impacts" that adding multiple salmon tankfarms to a single estuary could induce.

*LD 620 will give the DACF this authority.* The agency will specifically have the power to reject applications that WOULD cause harm when combined with other land based salmon farms, and revoke those that have turned out to be harmful to the natural ecosystem after being built.

*Please help make this happen by passing LD 620.*

*Thank you I'll be glad to take questions.*

Ron Huber