

February 28, 2019

Thank you once again, Senator Dill, Representative Hickman, and Members of the Committee for this opportunity to speak on **LD620/HD448**. My name is **Linda Buckmaster**, and I have lived in Belfast for 35 years.

It's not a coincidence that two of what are touted to be the largest RAS salmon aquaculture facilities in the world are being proposed for our shores of Penobscot Bay. Not only do we have the groundwater for them to draw down millions of gallons a day and the large water body in which to dispose their waste, but Maine has weak water laws and underdeveloped laws for land-based aquaculture.

By comparison, the more experienced Norway has strict regulations for salmon aquaculture and astronomically high licensing costs. It limits the size of such operations to 15,000 tons, compared to the 33,000 tons proposed for Belfast and 24,000 tons for Bucksport.

RAS salmon aquaculture is an emerging technology, and except in small boutique or trial operations, has no track record for the massive operations proposed in Maine. (In fact, the company Nordic Aquafarms has never harvested a commercial salmon anywhere in the world.) The law of unintended consequences always rules in emerging technologies, and at this point we need to protect the state from the unknown and known effects.

Some of the areas we have to be aware of are potential diseases getting into our waters; the importation and handling of salmon eggs, smolt, and fry; the conditions under which the fish will be raised; the use of antibiotics and fungicides; and the need for biohazard plans. All of these issues are compounded by the cumulative effects of multiple operations.

LD 620 is a good first step in addressing some of these cumulative effects. I encourage the Committee to support it as such. The State is building licensing and operations requirements for this new industry virtually from scratch. I appreciate the work that this committee is doing in this new area. We can't do this by trial and error, waiting for something to go wrong and then trying to rectify it legislatively after the barn door is open.

Please support LD620 with an eye to addressing more of the licensing and operation concerns in the future.