



**129<sup>TH</sup> MAINE LEGISLATURE  
COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE, CONSERVATION AND FORESTRY**

**Re: Testimony in Opposition to LD 620: An Act Regarding Licensing of Land-Based Aquaculture Facilities**

Senator Dill, Representative Hickman, distinguished members of the Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry. I am Marianne Naess, Commercial Director in Nordic Aquafarms. We consider ourselves environmentalists, and we are also concerned about the state of the ocean.

Simply put, LD 620 would make it dramatically harder to attract new jobs and investments to Maine both in Aquaculture and in other industries requiring large capital investments.

Nordic Aquafarms was started in Norway – going against the incumbent industry – to represent a more environmentally sustainable way of producing fish – a solution for the future. Nordic Aquafarms is a world leader in development of land-based aquaculture and the only company with projects in three different countries.

Nordic Aquafarms has successfully produced fish at our facility in Denmark, which is the world's largest Yellowtail Kingfish RAS facility, without any incidences. Our facility in Norway, which is the largest RAS facility in the country, will deliver fully grown fish to the market in less than a year

Nordic Aquafarms has done extensive R&D and invested millions in developing the world's best wastewater treatment system in the RAS industry today. This is done by using existing technology, and by applying several layers of treatment with different technology to ensure the highest level of nutrient removal possible today. This is not experimental technology, as has been stated by some people in Maine. We reduce Phosphorus, (P) Total Suspended Solids (TSS) and Biological Oxygen demand (BOD) with 99% and Nitrogen (N) with 85%. TSS and ammonia levels in the N discharge are lower than the background levels in the bay.

This bill is aimed at attacking one company and one industry. Implementing such a bill will be detrimental for large-scale business investments in Maine. Potential investors are looking for government predictability and a favorable business environment for investments.

There are currently two proposed projects being developed that will discharge into the Penobscot Bay, and thus will be affected by this bill. When the other RAS company located by Penobscot bay was granted its discharge permit last fall, we had already started the dialogue with the DEP and informed them about our discharge technology and values for nutrient discharge. Thus, the combined effect on the bay of the two facilities, was known to the DEP when the other permit was approved.



Nordic Aquafarms' levels of nutrient discharge is 6-7 times lower than other facilities being proposed per pound of fish produced. In fact, the total discharge for our proposed facility of 33,000 metric tons, is lower than facilities 1/6 of the proposed size. Our facility is also being developed over two to three phases, so the initial discharge will be much less, and the technology will be even further developed before we reach the fully built out stage.

Every project should be held responsible on its own merits and be required to discharge within their own permits.

Nordic Aquafarms is an experienced company with in-house engineers who have designed land-based facilities for more than 20 years. Our production managers are also some of the most experienced with RAS technology in the world.

We support monitoring of discharge and we are committed to stay within the discharge values approved in the permit, but we can't be held responsible for what other companies do. The proposed bill mentions the cumulative impact of the discharge, and not whether this applies to companies that fail to discharge within the levels approved in their permits.

The bill is also only targeted at land-based facilities. The cumulative levels of discharge in the body of water can also come from other industries, thus land-based aquaculture will be unfairly punished for pollution that may come from other industries.

Aquaculture is identified as one of the key areas to be developed in Maine. This bill will dramatically reduce any interest from investors to invest in Maine. A bill like this will automatically make it to the international fisheries media and Maine will be labelled a state to potentially avoid. Laws that arbitrarily attack an industry such as this one, may also reduce interest in investing in other industries as well.

No one wants to invest in a state in which a new industry may be subject to laws written to target their development. This is bad for Maine. In order to ensure a developing aquaculture industry in Maine, and in order to ensure that Maine attracts investments, I urge you to reject this bill.