

**TESTIMONY OF  
Deirdre Gilbert  
Department of Marine Resources**

**The Department of Marine Resources (DMR) is testifying  
In Opposition to**

**LD 620 An Act Regarding Licensing of Land-based Aquaculture Facilities  
Before the Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry  
Sponsored by Representative Dodge  
Date of Hearing: February 28, 2019**

Senator Dill, Representative Hickman, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Marine Resources, my name is Deirdre Gilbert, Director of State Marine Policy at the Department of Marine Resources, and I am testifying on behalf of the Department in opposition to LD 620.

In 2017, the authority to license land-based aquaculture facilities was moved from the Department of Marine Resources (DMR) to the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry (DACF). DMR and the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife (IFW) maintained the responsibility for advising the Commissioner of DACF on the risk the proposed facility may pose to indigenous marine or freshwater life or its environment.

When this authority was transferred from DMR to DACF, the language was taken verbatim from Title 12 and moved into Title 7. While the Commissioners may comment on any aspect of the operation that may pose a risk to the indigenous life or environment, they are particularly directed to the following:

- A. Risk of accidental or intentional introduction of marine or freshwater organisms or organism products into the waters of the State;
- B. Risk of the introduction or spread of disease within the State; and
- C. Interference with the enforcement of possession, size or season limits for wild marine or freshwater organisms.

The proposed language suggests that the Commissioners may consider the impacts from the facility proposed for licensing, either alone or in combination with other facilities using the same bodies of water. For the three topics that are identified above, there would be no difference in our assessment of facilities alone or in combination. For these reasons, the proposed change in law does not improve either Department's ability to provide input to DACF, but only complicates the law for no benefit.

Thank you for your consideration, and I would be happy to answer any questions you might have.