

Steve Eddy
Trenton
LD 586

Senator Reny, Representative Hepler and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Marine Resources. My name is Steve Eddy, and I am a resident of Trenton, Maine with over 25 years of experience working in the aquaculture profession as a fisheries and marine scientist. I am testifying in opposition to LD 586 "An Act to Protect Maine Fisheries from the Effects of Industrial Recirculating Aquaculture Operations".

Although I find many aspects of this bill troubling, the section prohibiting the use of wild marine organisms in aquafeeds is especially problematic. Fisheries management and utilization of herring, menhaden, krill, seaweed, and other marine species for fertilizer, bait, animal feeds, aquafeeds, and other useful products is a complex topic. Most of the fisheries for these species are considered well managed, but there is currently no scientific consensus regarding the sustainability of marine sourced ingredients vs terrestrial sourced ingredients. They both have their pros and cons, and I don't believe legislation prohibiting the specific use of marine ingredients in aquafeeds would be wise or useful at this point. The aquaculture industry is working very hard to find alternatives to marine ingredients and much progress has been made. However, some level of marine ingredients in aquafeeds remains essential for the health and welfare of cultured marine organisms. Marine species are adapted to digest marine diets and some nutrients such as omega 3 & 6 fatty acids are difficult to source from terrestrial crops. Prohibiting the use of marine sourced ingredients in aquafeeds would cause serious animal welfare issues for many of the fish species being considered for land-based aquaculture in Maine.

More broadly, I believe LD 586 could deter and maybe even completely stop further development of land-based aquaculture as a sustainable food production system in Maine. I support the work the Maine Aquaculture Association and others, including this committee, are doing to find constructive solutions that address public concerns while allowing Maine aquaculture businesses to grow. Thank you for your consideration.