

# Minot Weld

To: Marine Resources Committee

From: Minot Weld

Date: 03/16/2023

Re: Testimony in Support of LD 586, An Act to Protect Maine Fisheries from the Effects of Industrial Recirculating Aquaculture Operations

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Senator Reny, Representative Hepler, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Marine Resources, my name is Minot Weld, I am a resident of Mount Desert Township, and I am testifying in support LD 586.

As a graduate student at Cornell University in the late 1980's, I worked with one of the teams that originated Recirculating Aquaculture Systems (RAS). RAS systems were designed to be zero effluent. These facilities required only small amounts of "make up" water to replace that lost to evaporation and the water contained in harvested fish.

It is important to note that the facilities proposed in Maine are not fully recirculating. Rather, they are designed to pump millions of clean water into their plants per day and to release similar volumes of partially treated waste into our coastal waters.

This form of waste emitting Recirculating aquaculture is a rapidly emerging industry here in Maine. Now is the time to put regulations in place at the beginning before poorly considered projects set too large a precedent. If we get this right, we can hold it up as a model to the world. To let things progress unchecked is to invite ruin.

The Governor has set ambitious climate goals. Yet, these facilities will cause massive carbon emissions, erasing the hard-won efficiencies gained elsewhere across the state.

Further, all of the facilities proposed to date will flush millions of gallons of partially treated waster per day into our coastal waters. We cannot accept that, as the industry posits, 'the solution to pollution is dilution'. We do not know what the cumulative effect of this industrial effluent will be, but we do know that toxic algal blooms and shellfish closures are linked to high levels of nitrogen. We are placing the health of coastal ecosystems at risk.

Zero effluent systems are technically feasible and they can be financially viable. This is the standard that we need to establish.

Please vote 'ought to pass'

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