

My name is Cameron Barner and I am co-owner of Love Point Oysters in Freeport, Maine. I am writing to testify in opposition to LD 508. I oppose this bill because it is yet another attempt to halt the growing aquaculture industry in our state by burdening it with unnecessary or duplicative regulation.

Having worked and studied in the aquaculture industry in many states across our country, I have come to know that Maine has a robust aquaculture leasing system that is the envy of all coastal states who want to bolster their marine economy, while also protecting their marine resources. Our leasing process has been repeatedly improved and refined over 40 years of legislative and public discussion. It's a process that already requires the involvement of multiple state and federal agencies (DMR, DEP, USACOE), as well as municipal authorities and local stakeholders. There is no need to add additional regulatory layers when the process already functions for both protection of resources and building the marine economy.

This bill is not put before you because the proponents are concerned about the environment or because they think the aquaculture industry is polluting. This bill is a knee-jerk reaction to a controversial proposed lease in Frenchmans Bay. We should not make legislation or alter our functioning system because an anti-aquaculture lobbying group is using an isolated proposed project (that never saw the light of day) to fearmonger within our communities.

If LD 508 were to pass, it would eat up more time and resources from multiple agencies. It would also likely deter investment in our state's aquaculture industry across the board, just as it is beginning to gain traction as a major player in our State's economy. I urge you to please vote Ought NOT to Pass on LD 508. Thank you again.

Respectfully,  
Cameron Barner