

Daniel Devereaux
Mere Point Oyster Farm
LD 508

Senator Brenner, Representative Gramlich, and honorable members of the Committee on Environment and Natural Resources my name is Daniel Devereaux and I am in opposition to LD508 for a variety of reasons. I'm a military veteran, a retired Marine Warden and Harbormaster, and I'm currently employed as the Brunswick Coastal Resource Manager. I have lived and worked to protect the coastal waters and our precious marine environment in my community for the last 25 years. We have witnessed massive ecological changes in our coastal areas. Gentrification is at warp speed, small seasonal family camps sold and turned into starter mansions. Fishermen, blue collar families, working watermen being pushed out and off our coastal waters. New landowners are kicking clam diggers off the mudflats in front of their shoreline homes now. Waterfront properties being sold for residential develop at astronomical prices. Over MPOC's nearly 100 years of combined experience, we have witnessed massive fish kills, shellfish die offs, a near extinction of near shore lobster fishing, and ever increasing algal blooms from increased nitrogen pollution from the runoff within the watersheds.

As part of my commitment to the coastal waters we live on, my family and another local family founded Mere Point Oyster Company (MPOC). Understanding the ecological restorative nature of oyster farming my sons and I were excited when we applied for a 40 acre lease in Maquoit Bay in 2017. After all we were going be working on the water as a family and doing work that supports the marine ecology and our coastal environments. After 2 lengthy years, which comprised of THREE public hearings, we were granted 35 acres of shoal water in Maquoit Bay. In 4 short years we have be able to grow MPOC 10 full-time people and over 25 crew in peak season. We now distribute oysters nationwide.

Thank you for allowing me to share my perspective and why I oppose LD 508.

#1 First and foremost I oppose the way this bill was INTENTIONALLY held until the very last moment so anyone in opposition would not have time to respond. I was notified of this bill late last week and will not be able to stand before you because I had scheduled attending a US Coast Guard Master Captain Certification. Bills that are intentionally held to subvert the voices of constituents are WRONG. It's dirty politics.

#2 It was made aware LD 508 was proposed to Senator Grohoski by Crystal Canney the Executive Director of a group that is claiming to be "Protecting Maines Fishing Heritage", but its crickets when they are asked what they have really done to protect our fishing heritage. They have not contributed a damn this to help solve the right whale or offshore wind concerns. They focus solely of opposing aquaculture. I have a lot of experience with this group, as they were initially created to oppose my families oyster farm in Maquoit Bay. Canney was hired by millionaire seasonal shoreline landowners that looked out on our proposed farming area. Protect Maine Fishing Heritage and Crystal Canney are a ruse it's as simple as that. They distort facts, deploy scar tactics, and deceive people who are naive about aquaculture and its role and history along our coast. They have created division among our dwindling working waterfronts. Quite frankly they are propagandist that are funded by the wealthiest people from Maine and around the country.

#3 The bill establishes a working group comprised of multiple (17) "stakeholders" two come from aquaculture. The bill intentionally stacks the deck against aquaculture and is designed to discriminate against the aquaculture industry. Imagine proposing a working group to examine how DMR manages the endangered elver fishery with 17 members only two of which come from fishery? ^[L]_[SEP]

#4 In the last couple decades there have been over 20 studies conducted on aquaculture many focused on aquaculture development and regulation. Several studies have resulted from single controversial lease applications and the fact people

don't believe the existing leasing system guarantees a denial of that specific lease in their "backyard or better know as public waters. This LD is no different and is driven by the American Aqua-farms proposal in Frenchman Bay. The current regulatory processes would have ensured that proposal got a fair public hearing and would not been not approved if the stringent criteria was not met. The Maine aquaculture criteria is some of the strictest regulations in the US. It took my boys and I two years and additional 1 year of judicial review before we were allowed to farm oysters on the water they grew up on. I guess this long wait and intense regulatory scrutiny is why our aquaculture regulatory system is viewed superior to all other states.

Currently aquaculture operations on land and in marine waters are held to the same high regulatory standards with respect to discharges into aquatic environments. In addition, aquaculture operations in marine waters are held to higher standards than those on land with respect to conflicts with other users, impacts on navigation, ability to finance a project, and impacts on surrounding wildlife habitat and recreational uses. Imposing land use standards on marine leases will lead to decrease regulatory oversight and force standards not designed for or effective in aquatic ecosystems.

The bill directs the DEP to consider whether on-water aquaculture should be subject to the same or similar regulatory regime as land-based aquaculture. Marine and terrestrial ecosystems are different. Current land use and marine resource management methods acknowledge those differences and use tools that are designed to be effective in fundamentally different types of ecosystems. Trying to impose land management methods on aquatic ecosystems makes no sense and may result in serious unintended ecological and social impacts. Study commissions take tax dollars and divert agency resources away from their responsibilities. Currently these agencies have trouble keeping staff, processing applications, enforcing and regulating existing activities. This bill burdens them even more with politically motivated fodder resulting from a controversial aquaculture that was never even submitted.

I support efforts to find constructive solutions that address public concerns while allowing Maine aquaculture businesses to grow.

PLEASE VOTE OUGHT NOT TOO PASS, This bill is not good for Mainers, particularly those Mainers that work on the water and tend to already be underprivileged and underserved.

I'm sorry that this was so long. Thank you for your time.

Respectfully