



The Honorable Margaret Rotundo, Senate Chair  
The Honorable Melanie Sachs, House Chair  
Joint Standing Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs  
State House, Room 228  
Augusta, ME. 04333

Senator Rotundo, Representative Sachs, Honorable Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs, Honorable members of the Joint Committee on Marine Resources:

My name is Sebastian Belle and I am the Executive Director of the Maine Aquaculture Association (MAA). I stand before you today to testify in strong support of the proposed biennial budget request for the Department of Marine Resources. The MAA represents Maine's aquatic farmers and the many infrastructure companies that provide goods and services to our producers. Our farmers annually produce over 100 million dollars in farm gate revenue and directly employ roughly 700 Maine citizens year-round. We purchase goods and services from over 400 Maine businesses and our total economic impact is roughly 150 million dollars annually.

My apologies I am unable to appear before you in person today because we are co-hosting a three day conference on Seaweed aquaculture in Portland.. I wish to present testimony in strong support of LD 427, " An Act to Authorize a General Fund Bond Issue to Invest in Research, Development and Commercialization in Maine's Marine Technology and Aquaculture Sector" sponsored by Representative Morgan Rielly. Our community farms roughly 24 different species using 16 different production methods. Many of those species and farming methods are relatively new and we are still developing and refining culture methods for them. Critical to the development of those methods is research designed to increase efficiency, improve survival and reduce our environmental impacts. LD 427 helps support an investment in research and development in our sector that is growing and providing much needed revenue and year round jobs in our coastal communities.

Maine seafood is an iconic part of the Maine brand and Maine aquaculture products have earned their place as part of that brand. Please help us continue to build that brand and defend Maines working waterfronts. Vote "Ought to Pass" on LD 427. I thank you for your attention and patience and would be glad to answer any questions you may have.

Sincerely,

339 Water Street  
Gardiner, ME 04345  
(207) 622-0136  
[www.maineaqua.org](http://www.maineaqua.org)



A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "S. Belle", is centered below the logo.

Sebastian M. Belle  
Executive Director

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