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To: Joint Standing Committee on Marine Resources
Subject: Testimony 131st Legislature LD 2065
An Act to Amend Maine's Aquaculture Leasing Laws

Thank you to the co-chairpersons and the members of the JSCMR for this opportunity to testify related to LD 2065. I am unable to attend today's hearing however, this testimony represents three boards of directors on which I serve; Friends of Blue Hill Bay, Bagaduce Watershed Association, Climate Action Net.

I write in opposition to this bill and respectfully request that each of you vote Not Ought To Pass. It appears to me, the intent of this bill is to create limits on how we, the citizens of Maine, participate in governmental discourse.

Increasing the number of citizens from 5 citizens to 25 citizens required to petition the Department of Marine Resources to conduct a public hearing presents an obstacle to the spirit and intent of public hearings in a state where local control and home rule is at the core of its governance.

Currently, a lease applicant must notify riparian owners within 1000 feet of the proposed site. There are few areas except in southern Maine where 25 people live on a body of water which may be a potential lease site. I ask why 25, a five-fold increase? Is it to limit transparency to the public or just to limit participation. In a democracy this raises, in my view, an ethical question. The question raised is who does this bill represent. I urge you to consider in your decision today that you represent "we" the citizens. This bill represents who?

The law also proposes that "one" (1) notice be placed in a newspaper in the area of the state effected. How is that area defined? Might it be a circle on a map with a diameter of 5 miles, 50 miles or more? Many citizens read local papers with limited circulation and limited "news territories" therefore the area effected can be defined in many ways. This law is just too vague to guarantee optimum public input.

Additionally, "any other method considered appropriate" The word "Appropriate" is defined as suitable. Are we to assume that an applicant or those issuing leases know what is suitable in my area of the state. If they answer yes, we ask how long and to what extent was the study conducted to establish what is "Appropriate" or suitable. This does not engender trust in the process especially in view of increasing hearing petition requirements.

Converting an LPA to a 20 year standard lease without a 25 person hearing request amounts to eliminating any public review of the LPA leaseholder's compliance with regulations, their ecological or community impact. Does this protect in anyway those who cannot speak for themselves and live in the body of water with the proposed 20 year lease. It certainly, in my view, does not protect "we the taxpayer" as we are virtually closed out of public participation. Whose interest does this bill serve? Certainly not, in my view, the environment or the taxpayer.

Daniel Webster said " The peoples government, made for the people, made by the people, and answerable to the people" LD 2065 is NOT THIS!