

## TESTIMONY IN OPPOSITION TO LD 2065

### An Act to Amend Maine's Aquaculture Leasing Laws

Greetings Senator Reny, Representative Hepler, and the honorable members of the Legislative Joint Standing Committee on Marine Resources.

My name is Bailey Bowden and I live in Penobscot Maine. I have been the Chair of the Penobscot Shellfish Conservation Committee for sixteen years and also received a certificate for completing the *Aquaculture in Shared Waters* program that is sponsored by Maine Sea Grant.

I write today to voice my opposition to several of the changes put forth by LD 2065. In particular, **Sec. 3. 12 MRSA §6072, sub-§6, ¶B** which will reduce the number of times that a notice of a public hearing for an aquaculture lease must be printed in a newspaper from two to one. Many Maine coastal communities are served only by a weekly publication. Many coastal towns do not have reliable internet services and the local newspaper is the main source of local information.

Also, **Sec. 5. 12 MRSA §6072, sub-§12** and **Sec. 10. 12 MRSA §6072-A, sub-§6** will increase the number of signatures required to hold a public hearing from 5 to 25.

These changes will make it more difficult for the public to participate in any potential lease hearings happening in their municipality and it will be more difficult to become educated about the proposed aquaculture lease which is the entire purpose of the public hearing process. The scoping session, which is held earlier in the leasing process, is when the proposed project is first introduced to the municipality and it is only a general overview of the project. It is at the public hearing that the residents of the municipality first hear of the details of the project such as exact size, location, and what will be grown on site.

It is interesting to note that the number of signatures required to hold a public hearing for a Municipal Aquaculture Lease will remain at 5.

The Department of Marine Resources recently announces a series of "*listening sessions*" that will be held in five coastal communities to "*to foster understanding of the opportunities and challenges we face and discussion of the best ideas for moving forward with aquaculture in Maine.*"

Apparently one of DMR's best ideas is to limit public participation the leasing process.

These actions are forcing coastal communities to consider aquaculture ordinances to protect their right to participate in the decision-making process of commercial development that occurs within the municipal boundary.

Respectfully submitted,

Bailey Bowden

