



April 10, 2025

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

Senator Rotundo, Representative Gattine, Honorable members of the Joint Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs :

My name is Sebastian Belle and I am the Executive Director of the Maine Aquaculture Association (MAA). The MAA is the oldest state aquaculture association in the country. We represent Maine's aquatic farmers that raise finfish, shellfish and sea vegetables. 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.

I apologize for not being able to appear before you in person today, to testify in strong support of LD 25 "An Act to Authorize a General Fund Bond Issue to Fund Wastewater Treatment Facility Planning and Construction of Infrastructure Projects". Our members grow food in Maine's aquatic environments. Our farms and their products are literally immersed in the marine environment from the moment they are "planted" to the moment they are harvested. The quality and safety of those products is directly impacted by the health of the ecosystem and quality of the water they are in. The health and welfare of our employees and the plants and animals we grow is directly impacted by that same water quality. Discharges from public wastewater treatment facilities are the single greatest risk to that water quality. Many of our public wastewater treatment facilities are outdated and in need of significant upgrades. It is often very difficult for small Maine towns to raise the capital needed for these upgrades. LD 25 will give the Maine public a chance to support state investment to help towns meet those funding challenges. Please vote OUGHT TO PASS on LD 25.

Thank you for your attention, I would be glad to answer any questions you may have at the work session.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'S. Belle', is written over a light blue circular stamp.

Sebastian M. Belle
Executive Director