

Senator Tepler, Representative Hepler, and esteemed members of the committee on Marine Resources.

My name is Alex de Koning, and I am part owner, and CEO of Hollander and deKoning Shellfish Farms in Bar Harbor Maine which employs 18 people year round. I moved to the US at 14 years old from the Netherlands where my family has been farming mussels since the 1770's, I graduated from Umaine with an engineering degree and at age 21 I became a US citizen. I am happy to provide testimony to you today in support of 1722 "An Act to simplify the regulation of aquaculture leases." I apologize for not being there in person, as spring is a very busy time on the farm and I couldn't in good conscience get away.

As I'm sure you have heard, the backlog of aquaculture lease applications is consistently the number one issue farmers bring up as an impediment to the successful growth of a sustainable aquaculture industry in Maine. This bill eases some of the administrative burden on the DMR, and deduces the need for time spent on leases that are no problem at all. It is important to remember that the commissioner already has the ability to revoke a lease at any point he would like if the applicant is not acting the way they should. If there are no significant issues in the up to 20 year span of a lease, then it is highly unlikely that there is any significant reason to deny renewal, and so the DMR shouldn't waste its time on that being a long adjudicatory process.

I thank you for your time, and as always please feel free to reach out to me at Hollander.dekoning@gmail.com, or my cellphone (207) 479-4346. Thank you.