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Testimony of the Maine Municipal Association

In Opposition to

*LD 2025, An Act to Create a Limited-purpose License
for Aquaculture Nursery and Husbandry Activities and to
Clarify the Aquaculture Lease Amendment Process*

February 5, 2026

Senator Tepler, Representative Hepler and distinguished members of the Committee on Marine Resources, my name is Amanda Campbell, and I am submitting testimony in opposition to LD 2025 on behalf of the Maine Municipal Association's 70-member Legislative Policy Committee.

Municipal officials are concerned that despite ongoing requests, the opportunity for public notice and public engagement continues to be inconsistent.

Section 1 of this bill would repeal specific language in rulemaking related to public notice and the opportunity for the public to provide written comments when changes or modifications are proposed to an aquaculture lease. While rules and other language covering required public notice can be found in other subsections of 12 MRSA Chapter 605, the language is not consistent across subsections and does not always provide for the opportunity for public comment.

Additionally, the new sections proposed, §6072-E and §6072-F, include no provision for public notice or public comment.

In communities where the public is already struggling to understand the lease approval and renewal process, these exclusions do little to assure municipal officials or encourage public engagement. Municipal leaders recognize that diversification for local fishermen can provide stability for their families, thereby offering stability for their communities, and that the waters in which aquaculture leases are granted are managed by the state.

An improved working relationship between the department and municipal officials could assure local residents that whether their concerns are ecological, navigational, or economical, those involved in leasing decisions are considering all impacts those decisions may have on the surrounding community.

Thank you for your consideration of the municipal perspective. Please feel free to contact me or any member of the MMA Advocacy team with questions relating to municipal operations.