

# Testimony of

**Daniel R. Devereaux**

## **In Support of LD 2025**

Before the Joint Standing Committee on Marine Resources

Senator Tepler, Representative Hepler, and Honorable Members of the Committee,

My name is Daniel Devereaux, and my family co-owns Mere Point Oyster Company. I have spent nearly four decades working in Maine's shellfish industry — as marine law enforcement, shellfish resource manager, recreational harvesters and most recently as a shellfish farmer.

I am writing today in support of LD 2025, but I do so as someone who is fundamentally wary of creating new laws. Every new statute invites new rules, new interpretation, and new uncertainty. For those of us who make long-term investments in Maine's working waterfront, regulatory stability is not just a preference, it is essential.

Over the past few weeks, I have taken the time to listen to other growers and stakeholders. After those conversations, I have convinced myself that this bill is necessary. It is needed to help move Maine's shellfish farming into a more modern, structured, and predictable framework.

Today's shellfishing farming is not what it was years ago. Technology has advanced. Environmental conditions have changed. Predator pressure has increased. Markets have evolved. The industry has matured. It is reasonable that we expect our regulatory framework to evolve with it.

The Department is making a good-faith effort to address areas of ambiguity and to create a clearer process around nursery, husbandry, and lease amendments. That effort deserves recognition.

At the same time, I would be less than honest if I did not acknowledge that when new legislation is introduced, it creates stress for farmers. Regulatory change naturally creates uncertainty. For a family-owned shellfish farms like mine, uncertainty affects how we plan capital investments, gear purchases, labor decisions, and multi-year production cycles. Shellfish farming is not seasonal speculation — it is long-term, infrastructure-based food production. When rules are in flux, planning becomes more difficult.

However, uncertainty alone cannot be a reason to resist necessary modernization.

I have lived through regulatory changes affecting commercial fishermen. When laws are enacted that impact commercial fishing, those communities also experience the same stress and adjustment. Yet we understand that industries depending on public trust resources must

adapt to evolving environmental realities and public expectations. Shellfish farming is no different.

If we want Maine shellfish farming to be recognized as a legitimate, long-term working waterfront sector, our regulatory structure must mature alongside it.

As this bill moves forward, what matters most is how it is implemented through the development of the rules. The aquaculture community needs:

- Regulatory predictability
- Consistent application across regions and staff
- Fair and reasonable enforcement
- Transparency in rulemaking
- Ongoing communication between growers and the Department

Above all, we must remember that real livelihoods are at stake. These are family businesses. These are coastal jobs. These are investments measured in decades, not seasons.

LD 2025, if implemented thoughtfully and with continued collaboration between DMR and growers, has the potential to reduce gray areas and improve program consistency. It represents a step toward a more clearly defined and modern aquaculture program.

Progress is rarely perfect. What is important is that we continue working together - regulators, legislators, coastal landowners, other resource harvesters and farmers - to ensure that implementation reflects legislative intent and supports both responsible resource management and viable coastal economies.

We all share the same goal: healthy public waters, accountable shellfish farming, and thriving working waterfront communities.

For these reasons, I support LD 2025 and look forward to continued engagement as it moves forward.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully submitted,  
**Daniel R. Devereaux**

Daniel Devereaux  
Brunswick  
LD 2025

Testimony of  
Daniel R. Devereaux  
In Support of LD 2025

Before the Joint Standing Committee on Marine Resources

Senator Tepler, Representative Hepler, and Honorable Members of the Committee,  
My name is Daniel Devereaux, and my family co-owns Mere Point Oyster Company.  
I have spent nearly four decades working in Maine's shellfish industry — as marine  
law enforcement, shellfish resource manager, recreational harvesters and most  
recently as a shellfish farmer.

I am writing today in support of LD 2025, but I do so as someone who is  
fundamentally wary of creating new laws. Every new statute invites new rules, new  
interpretation, and new uncertainty. For those of us who make long-term investments  
in Maine's working waterfront, regulatory stability is not just a preference, it is  
essential.

Over the past few weeks, I have taken the time to listen to other growers and  
stakeholders. After those conversations, I have convinced myself that this bill is  
necessary. It is needed to help move Maine's shellfish farming into a more modern,  
structured, and predictable framework.

Today's shellfishing farming is not what it was years ago. Technology has advanced.  
Environmental conditions have changed. Predator pressure has increased. Markets  
have evolved. The industry has matured. It is reasonable that we expect our regulatory  
framework to evolve with it.

The Department is making a good-faith effort to address areas of ambiguity and to  
create a clearer process around nursery, husbandry, and lease amendments. That effort  
deserves recognition.

At the same time, I would be less than honest if I did not acknowledge that when new  
legislation is introduced, it creates stress for farmers. Regulatory change naturally  
creates uncertainty. For a family-owned shellfish farms like mine, uncertainty affects  
how we plan capital investments, gear purchases, labor decisions, and multi-year  
production cycles. Shellfish farming is not seasonal speculation — it is long-term,  
infrastructure-based food production. When rules are in flux, planning becomes more  
difficult.

However, uncertainty alone cannot be a reason to resist necessary modernization.

I have lived through regulatory changes affecting commercial fishermen. When laws  
are enacted that impact commercial fishing, those communities also experience the  
same stress and adjustment. Yet we understand that industries depending on public  
trust resources must adapt to evolving environmental realities and public expectations.  
Shellfish farming is no different.

If we want Maine shellfish farming to be recognized as a legitimate, long-term  
working waterfront sector, our regulatory structure must mature alongside it.

As this bill moves forward, what matters most is how it is implemented through the  
development of the rules. The aquaculture community needs:

- Regulatory predictability
- Consistent application across regions and staff
- Fair and reasonable enforcement
- Transparency in rulemaking
- Ongoing communication between growers and the Department

Above all, we must remember that real livelihoods are at stake. These are family  
businesses. These are coastal jobs. These are investments measured in decades, not  
seasons.

LD 2025, if implemented thoughtfully and with continued collaboration between  
DMR and growers, has the potential to reduce gray areas and improve program  
consistency. It represents a step toward a more clearly defined and modern  
aquaculture program.

Progress is rarely perfect. What is important is that we continue working together - regulators, legislators, coastal landowners, other resource harvesters and farmers - to ensure that implementation reflects legislative intent and supports both responsible resource management and viable coastal economies.

We all share the same goal: healthy public waters, accountable shellfish farming, and thriving working waterfront communities.

For these reasons, I support LD 2025 and look forward to continued engagement as it moves forward.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

Daniel R. Devereaux