



# BAR HARBOR

EST. 2014

# OYSTER COMPANY

Bar Harbor Oyster Company

105 Seabury Dr., Bar Harbor, ME 04609

To The Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry Committee,

I am writing to request you vote “Ought to Pass” on LD 299. I support MAA and their efforts to support agricultural, forestry, and working waterfront communities.

As the co-owner of an oyster farm, I can personally attest that aquaculture *is* farming, we just do it in the water instead of on land like our colleagues in agriculture and forestry. LD 299 is NOT asking for any new taxes or fees to be imposed on Maine citizens, it is merely shifting some money internally that the state already collects to an industry that would greatly benefit from that contribution. Maine's working landscapes and waterfronts need a sustainable long-term fund that supports infrastructure investments in our communities. These sectors currently do not have access to this type of low-cost investment capital, and we compete against other states and countries that do.

Our working landscapes and waterfronts are being lost due to conversion to residential use at the fastest rate in Maine history. Those working farms, forests, and sea farms are one of the most important and iconic parts of the Maine image. Their preservation is critical to the state's tourism industry which is the state's largest economic driver. The best way to preserve the Maine “brand” is to ensure that working farms, forests, and waterfronts can remain viable and competitive businesses. LD 299 helps do that.

Please help support the Maine working waterfront and aquaculture industries by voting “Ought to Pass.” Your local sea farmers and farmers will thank you.

Sincerely,

Joanna Fogg