

To: Joint Standing Committee
From: Amanda Nicholson, Maine Youth for Climate Justice
Date: Thursday, March 5th, 2026

Re: Testimony in Support of L.D. 299: “An Act to Support Investment in Agriculture.”

Dear Representative Warren, Senator Talbot Ross, and esteemed members of the Committee on Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry,

Good afternoon, my name is Amanda Nicholson, and I am a member of Maine Youth for Climate Justice’s legislative team. MYCJ supports young people in the fight for climate action and justice through legislative advocacy, community organizing, and educational programs. I am also a current high school senior at the Maine School of Science and Mathematics, and I have previously interned with Seaport Systems, an environmental monitoring buoy manufacturer that supports small-business aquaculturalists.

Today I am writing to you all in support of L.D. 299, “An Act to Support Investment in Agriculture,” as amended.

If this amendment were to pass, the definition of producer would be altered to allow those who grow, harvest, and manufacture aquacultural products access to the Maine Agriculture, Food and Forest Products Investment Fund.

I believe this would be an amazing amendment to pass, as it would allow an opportunity for sea farmers and aquaculturalists to build up their businesses like traditional farmers and forest manufacturers. Maine is a state known for its seafood, which is one of our most important industries to our economy at both the local and statewide levels. Additionally, during my internship at Seaport Systems, I learned that many aquaculture practices can benefit the health of the Gulf of Maine. Practices like oyster and seaweed farming naturally collect carbon, purify water, and support biodiversity, especially when done at a smaller scale, like most of our current sea farmers. Not only would this amendment increase opportunities for a larger sector of Maine industry, but it would also support the very habitat that the industry relies on.

Therefore, I believe it is crucial to pass this amendment for Maine citizens, businesses, and Maine as a whole.

Thank you for your time and consideration.
Sincerely,
Amanda Nicholson, MYCJ