

Testimony in favor of LD 508 A Resolve Directing the Department of Environmental Protection to Review Its Environmental Permitting Laws

April 20, 2023

Good Afternoon Senator Brenner, Representative Gramlich, and honorable members of the Joint Standing Committee on Environment and Natural Resources.

My name is Bailey Bowden and I am a resident of the town of Penobscot.

I appear today to voice my support for LD 508 A Resolve Directing the Department of Environmental Protection to Review Its Environmental Permitting Laws.

To the best of my knowledge, most of the laws governing site location of development listed under Chapter 3, Subchapter 1, Article 6 were written over ten years ago. The laws that specifically mention aquaculture were written in 2007 – over fifteen years ago.

Much has changed within the aquaculture industry in the past fifteen years. The promotion of aquaculture by the Department of Marine Resources has led to gold rush mentality creating a rapid expansion of the industry. According to the DMR website there are 80 lease applications that are deemed complete. The maximum allowable acreage that one person or entity can lease has expanded from 100 acres to 1000 acres.

Today, large scale fin fish aquaculture operations are facing intense examination of their effect on marine ecosystems. The entire west coast of the United States, including Alaska, have banned net pen farming of fish in the ocean as have Argentina and Denmark, yet Maine is welcoming these industrial scale fish farms with open arms.

With the passing of time and the increase in the acreage under lease, I believe that it would be prudent to examine the accumulative effect that aquaculture is having on the marine environment and to review the laws regarding where such projects are located.

I respectfully request that you to vote “ought to pass “ on LD 508.

Thank you for your time in considering this resolve and would be happy to answer any questions that you may have.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Bailey Bowden". The signature is fluid and extends to the right with a long, sweeping underline.

Bailey Bowden
Penobscot, Maine