

Senator Brenner, Representative Gramlich and members of the Environment and Natural Resources Committee. My name is Jerry Leeman and I am testifying on behalf of Protect Maine for the proposed bill LD 508.

I would appreciate it if everyone took a moment to imagine what they know a fish farm to look like. Disturbed natural landscape, overstocked fish pens, hosing and all to mimic our original aquatic ecosystem while I tell you a story.

Tetracycline is an antibiotic used in humans to treat lung infections such as pneumonia. If you've ever had pneumonia and been treated for it, it is likely that you were administered some form of a tetracycline medication. This chemical is used in aquaculture to treat farmed fish for bacterial infections generated by the unnatural population enclosed in close quarters, and as proven by studies reviewed and published by the National Library of Medicine, is the a main cause of perpetuating antibiotic resistance in the environment. If we remember covid, and how quickly it was able to spread across our nation and the world killing our family and friends.

Imagine continuously being forced to live through that era that we have finally escaped, for your entire life. No masks to protect you, no ability to social distance, only medication administered to ease your pain as you move through a constricted life. That is part of the reality for fish bred by aquaculture fish farms. Tetracycline is an endocrine disrupting chemical, and while it should be administered as a medication one takes when experiencing an illness, it should not be something that is allowed to flood our home waters. Endocrine disrupting chemicals can be referenced as a toxic chemical prohibited for use by Chapter 27 of the Code of Maine Rules under the Department of Environmental Protection. In the case of tetracycline, studies on the disturbance of endocrine functions are new and limited but point towards complicating testosterone production in mammals. Guess what, we are mammals, man or woman doesn't matter, and we all require balanced testosterone levels for a full and happy life. We stand to be the mammals that will be eating those farmed fish. We are risking so much by approving leases

for aquaculture fish farms being approved by our state. We should be able to trust the efforts of our environment's protectors. This needs to be reviewed.

Biomagnification is the process by which an accumulation of chemicals is built up through digestive and metabolic processes within an organism's body. Tetracycline is not the only antibiotic pumped through these pens, it is just one of many. Aquaculture is a real threat to our marine fisheries. I have 28 years at sea. Twenty Eight. I have fished as a captain across 4 different fisheries, all of them being wild harvest. I am telling you, without a fathom of a doubt, aquaculture cannot be brought to Maine if we have any hope of preserving this land that we are blessed with. The Department of Environmental Protection should be the ones standing where I am today, speaking on behalf of their own need to review what pollutants are allowed by the Code of this state that they are obligated by duty to adhere to.

Wild harvesters deal with these missed opportunities for natural preservation more commonly on the federal level, with wind farms risking to disturb the entire balance of the open ocean in our Gulf. These risks cannot be ignored by our state. We are the Vacationland, the most environmentally preserved state in all of New England. People travel across the globe to see our beautiful state. No one hauls to Jersey to see a perfectly preserved coast, they come here. To *our* home. Maine should be on the forefront of preventing these risks to this land, and the Mainer's traditions. LD 508 brings about a call to action to renew efforts of review. Please, hear me as a fisherman and understand that I am only standing here because I know by trade what is right by this land and her waters, and that opportunities for reviews to be done by those who are charged to protect this State need to be made. Thank you for listening.