

Elizabeth Walker, Walpole, Maine
Summary of Testimony
Senator Reny, Representative Hepler and Members of the Joint Standing
Committee on Marine Resources
February 1, 2024

For the reasons below, I oppose LD 2065

- Public hearings play a critical role in DMR's aquaculture leasing process
- LD 2065 will seriously impair the public's access to aquaculture hearings and is not in the public interest
- Public policy should support efforts to broaden, not narrow, public access to hearings on matters that affect our valuable public trust assets, our coastal waters – to do otherwise undervalues the importance of public's trust, confidence and level of engagement
- Public hearings are the most appropriate, and proven, way to determine the facts and test credibility of parties and their positions
- Public hearings have the potential to enhance the institutional legitimacy of DMR; LD 2065 undervalues this essential process
- In an era of moratoriums and public push-back, LD 2065 only serves to sharpen differences between warring parties
- We can do better than this

I offer a petition, signed by approximately 20 of my Maine neighbors who oppose LD 2065

As a citizen of Maine, I am signing this letter to urge the Marine Resources committee to vote **NO** on LD 2065, a bill that seeks to increase the required number of people to hold a hearing on aquaculture leases. Currently, 5 people can request a hearing - the Department of Marine resources wants to increase that number to 25.

This increase will make it more difficult for citizen participation and transparency around issues in siting aquaculture.

Public hearings are one of the few opportunities for citizens to voice opinions and provide input on proposed aquaculture leases. Public hearings not only provide input but is an opportunity to collaborate, ask questions, resolve factual issues, and public discourse.

Recently, the Department of Marine resources has focused on increasing public input in community conversations however, this bill sponsored by the department is counter intuitive to increasing public access to the process.

Increasing the number of people required to hold a hearing and have a voice in the process is anti-democratic and will only dampen community engagement or eradicate it all together.

| Print Name | Signature | Town |
|-----------------------|--------------------|--------------|
| John Walker | <i>[Signature]</i> | 6th Bristol |
| Nancy Glassman | <i>[Signature]</i> | SEASIDE |
| Cynthia Dwyer | <i>[Signature]</i> | BRUNSWICK |
| Mark Little | <i>[Signature]</i> | Gardner |
| Math Demers | <i>[Signature]</i> | Gardner |
| Allison McKeen | <i>[Signature]</i> | Gardner |
| Gideon Boh | <i>[Signature]</i> | Gardner |
| Miriam Brady | <i>[Signature]</i> | Cushing |
| Melanie Essex | <i>[Signature]</i> | Bristol |
| Heather Leeman | <i>[Signature]</i> | BRISTOL |
| CHAS LEEMAN | <i>[Signature]</i> | BRISTOL |
| Timothy Rudell-Leeman | <i>[Signature]</i> | Damariscotta |
| Kyle Cotta | <i>[Signature]</i> | Bristol |
| Matthew Raposa | <i>[Signature]</i> | Bristol |
| Kyana K. Hinden | <i>[Signature]</i> | BRISTOL |

| Print Name | Signature | Town |
|----------------------|--------------------|---------|
| Robert F. McLaughlin | <i>[Signature]</i> | WALPOLE |
| ROBERTA McLAUGHLIN | <i>[Signature]</i> | WALPOLE |
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