

Good Afternoon,  
Senator Reny, Representative Hepler and members of the joint standing committee on Marine Resources.

My name is Camden Reiss, I am a shellfish harvester in the town of Brunswick, in which I serve as chair of the marine resources committee. I am a consultant to Protect Maine's Fishing Heritage Foundation and organization that opposes industrial scale aquaculture but supports small scale owner- operator aquaculture.

I am speaking today in opposition to this bill. It does not make any sense to increase the number of required intervenors from 5 to 25 people. This is basically a slap in the face to anyone directly impacted by potential aquaculture operations. The message conveyed through this bill is that 1 company, corporation or individual deserves more judicial rights than 24 people.

In my opinion, a public hearing should be required when even 1 person is potentially affected by an aquaculture lease. The reason I believe this is because a public hearing is the best opportunity for members of the public to voice their opinion and stick up for their own sovereign rights. Oftentimes, the lease applicant receives crucial feed-back, which creates an opportunity to adjust parts of the proposed lease to ensure there will be no problems in the future.

It is ridiculous to expect 25 members of the public to show up to a public hearing. 25 people might be obtainable in more populated coastal towns, but think about the towns in down east Maine, where towns struggle to even staff required local government.

Increasing the number of people required to permit the chance to voice opposition is anti-democracy and will only dampen community engagement or eradicate it all together. I urge the committee to vote no on this bill. Thank you for your time.