

LD 2065

LD 2065: An Act to Amend Maine's Aquaculture Leasing Laws

Good Afternoon,
Senator Cameron Reny, Representative Allison Hepler and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Marine Resources.

My name is Kelsey Fenwick, and I am a sternman fishing out of Port Clyde. Additionally, I am a consultant to Protect Maine's Fishing Heritage Foundation, an organization that opposes industrial scale aquaculture but supports small scale owner-operator aquaculture.

I am here today to oppose LD 2065, as I think the proposed changes will have a negative impact for citizens. The proposed change of increasing the number of persons required to request a hearing from 5 to 25 people will make it more difficult for the public to participate in the process of aquaculture leasing. Increasing the number of people required to have a hearing will create a greater divide between the aquaculturists and the community, as the community would not be involved in the process. This proposed change makes it appear like the Department of Marine Resources doesn't care to hear what the public has to say.

Public hearings have been the forum that allows the public to ask questions, provide input, and to encourage collaboration between all parties. However, this bill seems to discourage the holding of public hearings. This bill seeks to make the leasing process faster and easier for aquaculturists and DMR, but no one else. Please vote no on LD 2065 so the people of Maine can keep participating in the process and not be silenced.

Additionally, I am including a petition with signatures of citizens who also urge the Committee to vote no on LD 2065.

Thank you for your time.

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1/29/24
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