



Cameron Reny
Senator, District 13

THE MAINE SENATE
132nd Legislature

3 State House Station
Augusta, Maine 04333

Testimony of Sen. Cameron Reny introducing
LD 1026, "An Act to Improve Community Communication in Aquaculture Siting,"
Before the Joint Standing Committee on Marine Resources
March 27, 2025

Senator Tepler, Representative Hepler, and honorable colleagues on the Joint Standing Committee on Marine Resources, I am Senator Cameron Reny, and I represent District 13, which includes most of Lincoln County and the towns of Washington and Windsor. Today, I am presenting LD 1026, "An Act to Improve Community Communication in Aquaculture Siting."

Aquaculture has become a major part of our marine economy. Oyster cages float in our rivers. Mussels hang from platforms in our bays. Kelp lines spread through our waters. This is especially true in my district, home to some of Maine's most famous oyster growing waters. I receive recurring complaints from constituents who feel left out of the decision-making process, as well as frustration about the quantity of aquaculture leases and potential hearings. I am also aware of the very long involved lease application processes that includes opportunities for the town and residents to provide feedback, as well as reasonable defensive feelings from industry attacks while trying to provide jobs and make a living on the water. We need a better solution so municipalities don't keep falling back on unenforceable aquaculture moratoriums.

The proposed legislation requires the new Maine Office of Community Affairs to create and provide municipalities, tribal governments, and regional councils with a mapping template and technical assistance to proactively map out areas of concern related to aquaculture lease siting. I would add to this proposal that MOCA distributes model best practices for establishing a comprehensive stakeholder group to manage the mapping process. This will help ensure that communities and individual citizens have the tools they need to proactively inform the town and state where and how the public is using the surrounding waters.

I want to be very clear. This bill is not anti-aquaculture. This bill is not anti-municipality, anti-DMR, anti-property owner, anti-fisheries, or anti-recreational users of public waters. This is very narrowly pro-communication, and an attempt to improve relations in the state of Maine between communities, the state, and groups of people and businesses that use public waters for different purposes. I would rather work to kill this bill than see it harm my district's people or businesses.

This bill intends to improve communication, increase understanding, and ease the persistent contention I see in my coastal towns. I hope you will join me in supporting our aquaculture farmers and harvesters, and our towns in this way.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Cameron Reny". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Cameron" and last name "Reny" clearly distinguishable.

Cameron Reny

State Senator, District 13

Representing Lincoln County and the towns of Washington and Windsor