



**MAINE
AQUACULTURE
ASSOCIATION**

13:56

The Honorable Nicole Grohoski, Senate Chair
The Honorable Kristen Cloutier, House Chair
Joint Standing Committee on Taxation
State House, Room 202
Augusta, ME. 04333

Senator Grohoski, Representative Cloutier, Honorable members of the Joint Committee on Taxation:

My name is Sebastian Belle and I am the Executive Director of the Maine Aquaculture Association (MAA). The MAA is the oldest state aquaculture association in the country. We represent Maine's aquatic farmers that raise finfish, shellfish and sea vegetables. Our farmers annually produce over 100 million dollars in farm gate revenue and directly employ roughly 700 Maine citizens year-round. We purchase goods and services from over 400 Maine businesses and our total economic impact is roughly 150 million dollars annually.

I stand before you today, to testify in support of LD 1168 "An Act to Amend the Law Regarding the Current Use Valuation of Certain Working Waterfront Land with Respect to Commercial Boat Yards". The MAA was one of the original groups that lobbied for the current use taxation program for working waterfront properties. This program is an important tool for the preservation of working waterfront properties in our state and was one of the first such programs in the country. LD 1168 seeks to correct an oversight in the original legislation that inadvertently excluded boat yards that serve the commercial fishing and aquaculture sectors. Commercial boat yards are increasingly coming under development pressure for conversion to non-commercial use. These facilities serve a vital service and support function to our commercial fishing and aquaculture sectors and as such should qualify for the current use taxation program. Please vote OUGHT TO PASS on LD 1168.

Thank you for your attention, I would be glad to answer any questions you may have.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "S. Belle". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Sebastian M. Belle
Executive Director