



**Testimony against
LD 1722 An Act to Simplify the Regulation of Aquaculture Leases
April 24, 2025**

Greetings Senator Tepler, Representative Hepler, and honorable members of the Joint Standing Committee on Marine Resources. On behalf of Protect Maine's Fishing Heritage Foundation, I would like to submit testimony in opposition to LD 1722 *An Act to Simplify the Regulation of Aquaculture Leases*.

My name is Bailey Bowden and I live in Penobscot, Maine. I am here today as a consultant for Protect Maine's Fishing Heritage Foundation, an organization that fully supports small scale and properly sited aquaculture operations.

LD 1722 would essentially make a standard lease renewal and the conversion of a limited purpose lease a rubber stamp process. This bill removes the adjudicatory process for standard lease renewal which allows public input that maintains transparency and requires the commissioner to approve the conversion of a limited purpose lease to a full lease without review. The limited purpose lease is for commercial or scientific research. Since these leases are not using the normal established farming techniques, it would be prudent to determine if the unconventional farming practices have had an adverse impact on the environment before allowing the same use to continue.

It is important to remember that Maine's waters are a public trust to be used by everyone and a lease allows exclusive use of this trust for up to twenty years. LD 1722 removes the statutory requirement that the Department review the performance or stewardship of the leaseholder prior to renewal or conversion.

Protect Maine's Fishing Heritage Foundation respectfully requests that this committee vote ought not to pass on LD 1722.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this bill.