



Monday, May 17, 2021

Joint Standing Committee on Environment & Natural Resources
Cross Building, Room 216
Augusta, ME 04333

Senator Brenner, Representative Tucker, and Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Environment & Natural Resources;

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony. My name is Dr. Meredith White, I live in Bath, and I am the Director of Research and Development at Mook Sea Farm in Walpole. I have been in this role for four and a half years, and have lived in Maine for eight years. I represent someone who is employed in the industry, but who is not an entrepreneur. I'm asking you to vote 'ought to pass' on LD 1429: An Act To Implement the Most Time-sensitive Recommendations of the Maine Climate Council.

I work in a Maine industry, aquaculture, which has already experienced impacts of climate change on our bottom line. In the past two decades, we have experience more frequent 'rainfall closures' which prohibit us from harvesting our oysters following a heavy rainfall event, each event resulting in the loss of tens of thousands of dollars of sales. We are experiencing increasing water temperatures, which increase oyster and human pathogens, putting our crop at risk, and leading to more costly regulation to ensure seafood safety. We are also experiencing changes to water chemistry, known as coastal acidification, which increases our hatchery production expenses. These changes have led Mook Sea Farm to invest in an over \$3 million dollar land-based aquaculture facility to help us build resiliency in the face of climate change.

The Maine Climate Council was an historic effort, in which Mook Sea Farm was thrilled to be involved, with owner and founder Bill Mook as a member of the Coastal and Marine Working Group. LD 1429 seeks to implement some of the most time-sensitive recommendations from the final report of the Maine Climate Council. We cannot wait any longer to take action at the state level, as our national leaders stall and delay federal action on climate change.

I would love to see Mook Sea Farm oysters as a part of school lunches through the proposed Maine Farm and Fish to School Program, but even if that never happens, this program will still have an impact on Mook Sea Farm's bottom line, through a local reduction in carbon emissions associated with food transportation. Our business relies on a clean environment and we NEED the State of Maine to take action to reduce the impacts of climate change here.

Please vote 'ought to pass' so that Mainers can benefit from these near-term actions necessary to reduce our state's carbon footprint and environmental impacts.

Sincerely,

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