

April 20, 2023

Testimony of Erin Adams, Maine Ocean Farms, LLC
Against LD 508

“A Resolve, Directing the Department of Environmental Protection to Review its Environmental Permitting Laws”, mandates that the Department of Environmental Protection form a study group to determine whether ocean based aquaculture should be regulated like land based aquaculture operations.”

Dear Environment and Natural Resources Committee,

My name is Erin Adams and I am an ocean farmer representing Maine Ocean Farms, a ten acre oyster farm in Recompense Cove, Freeport. I'm also a marine scientist and educator with ten years of experience working in fisheries science in New England. It is through this lens that I recognize the weakness in proposal LD 508 is the suggestion that one regulation regime can be applied to different ecosystems with an expectation of a similar outcome. Each aquaculture farm, whether land or marine based has its own ecosystem with different species and different input and output variables. An effective management regime needs to take into account these different variables which management currently does. For example, all aquaculture operations on both land and in the marine environment are held to the same high standards for water discharge quality and it is through the existing management regimes, which understand that these environments are different, that the same end result is achieved. Conforming one ecosystem to another for the sake of regulation is irresponsible and may result in serious unintended ecological and social impacts.

From where we stand, as ocean farmers, the vague wording in this proposal is nothing more than a tactic to slow down leasing and create additional permitting obstacles that will limit our ability in producing sustainable and environmentally beneficial food. The redundancy proposed will require significant state, taxpayer, and industry resources to add an unnecessary layer to an already robust permitting review process. Speaking for myself and on the behalf of my four colleagues at Maine Ocean Farms, we oppose LD 508.

Thank you very much for allowing me to share these views.

Sincerely,

Erin K Adams
Maine Ocean Farms, LLC

Erin Adams
Maine Ocean Farms
LD 508

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