

Nellie Brylewski
Muscongus Bay Aquaculture
LD 508

My name is Nellie Brylewski and I am the General Manager for Muscongus Bay Aquaculture and Dodge Cove Marine Farm. I have been working in Maine aquaculture for 13 years and look forward to many more, and eventually bringing my young daughters into the trade.

I OPPOSE bill LD 508

Maine has conducted 24 aquaculture studies over the past 30 years, with the majority focusing on aquaculture development and regulation. The drivers for these studies are often rooted in political pressure from groups opposed to aquaculture and working waterfronts, and are frequently a response controversial lease applications and the lack of trust that the existing leasing system will guarantee a denial of that specific lease. This proposal is no different and is driven by the American Aquafarms proposal in Frenchman Bay.

The existing regulations work and would have given that proposal a fair hearing, but would most likely not have approved it, because the Maine system and criteria are some of the strictest in the world.

We do not need to change the system to ensure bad proposals don't get approved; that is already the case. That's why the Maine regulatory system is viewed as a gold standard and why regulators come from all over the world to learn about how Maine manages aquaculture.

Maine's aquaculture operations, both land and marine based, are held to the same high regulatory standards with respect to discharges into aquatic environments. Additionally, marine based aquaculture operations are held to higher standards than those on land when considering conflicts with other users, impacts on navigation, ability to finance a project, and impacts on surrounding wildlife habitat and recreational uses.

Marine and terrestrial ecosystems are different. Current land use and marine resource management methods recognize those differences and use tools that are designed to be effective in these very different ecosystems. Trying to impose land management methods on aquatic ecosystems makes no sense and may result in serious unintended ecological and social impacts.

Bill 508 will require three state agencies to commit significant resources and staff time to produce yet another study. This will take valuable tax dollars and divert agency resources away from their regulatory responsibilities, and at the end of the day will not result in substantive improvements to existing regulatory systems that DO need help (namely the DMR's ability to process lease applications in a timely manner).