

Michael Gaffney
Georgetown
LD 508

First, Do No Harm

Dear Legislators:

I write in opposition to LD 508

Mike Gaffney here, oyster farmer in Robinhood Cove, Georgetown.

I'm opposed to this bill for two reasons:

1. We currently don't have enough DMR staff to process aquaculture lease applications in a timely fashion. This study specifies that at least one DMR person will be assigned to the proposed study. That constitutes 20% of DMR's complement.

2. That sort of investment might be warranted if there was a demonstrated need – if something was broken that needed fixing. But that doesn't seem to be the case here. There has been no approval of a single ocean aquaculture lease by DEP or DMR that has subsequently proven to be problematic in terms of climate change, habitat connectivity, ecological resilience, or the coastal marine environment. And applications that might have presented such problems, have not made it through the permitting process.

In short, the current permitting process is working – and working well. LD 508 is not needed, would cause stress on existing limited regulatory resources, and would impede the growth of all types of aquaculture (not just finfish) in Maine -- including my farm.

Thank you,

Michael E. Gaffney
Eros Oyster
mike@erosoyster.com
(207) 751-7956