

Krista Tripp  
Aphrodite Oysters LLC.  
LD 508

04/17/2023

To whom it may concern,

I am an owner of a small oyster farm in South Thomaston, Maine. The name of my company is Aphrodite Oysters LLC. I am opposing this bill, LD 508.

I support MAA and their efforts to find constructive solutions that address public concerns while allowing Maine aquaculture businesses to grow.

This bill establishes a working group comprised of multiple (17) "stakeholders" only two of which come from aquaculture. It is intentionally a "stacked deck" and is designed to ensure the regulated community (aquaculture) is in the minority and discriminated against in the process.

Currently aquaculture operations on land and in marine waters are held to the same high regulatory standards with respect to discharges into aquatic environments. In addition, aquaculture operations in marine waters are held to higher standards than those on land with respect to conflicts with other users, impacts on navigation, ability to finance a project, and impacts on surrounding wildlife habitat and recreational uses. Imposing land use standards on marine leases may actually decrease the stringency of regulatory oversight and force agencies to use standards not designed for or effective in aquatic ecosystems.

The bill directs the DEP to consider whether on-water aquaculture should be subject to the same or similar regulatory regime as land-based aquaculture. Marine and terrestrial ecosystems are different. Current land use and marine resource management methods acknowledge those differences and use tools that are designed to be effective in fundamentally different types of ecosystems. Trying to impose land management methods on aquatic ecosystems makes no sense and may result in serious unintended ecological and social impacts.

Thank you for your time in reading this and I hope you take these points into consideration when deciding the fate of the Aquaculture Industry for the state of Maine. I do not see the need to alter a system that is already working as the "golden standard," which is the reason regulators come from all over the world to learn more about how Maine manages aquaculture.

Sincerely,  
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