

Rock Alley
Jonesport Beals

Chairman Miramant, Representative McCreight,
My name is Rock Alley. I am the President of Protect Maine's Fishing Heritage Foundation and the Maine Lobsterman's Union. I am here today as a lobsterman to support LD 1146.

Why is it that it takes this much political struggle just to have a conversation in Maine? For two years I have watched the political shifting of the winds on issues that affect lobsterman – be it aquaculture, wind, or right whale. I can tell you why no one wants to engage in a conversation about aquaculture – the aquaculture lobby has had its way far too long with weak rules that don't protect the ocean for everyone. The aquaculture lobby has donated to political campaigns of people sitting here making the decisions today about whether or not we should have a plan or look at the aquaculture.

Let me summarize this all for you –

The rules and regulations that were changed in 2006 and 2017 allowing 1,000 acre leases and 20 year terms were done without industry representation. You know there are many of us who work from 3am and 7pm most days of the week. While the lobbyists got there way – they now have our attention and the support for changing some of the rules around aquaculture is strong.

Before a single member of this committee or the aquaculture lobby tries to discredit us saying – we are anti aquaculture – Protect Maine's Fishing Heritage Foundation is not.

We are just as concerned that small aquaculturists will be put out of business by large corporations – corporations who employ a 1/10th of the people that family-run businesses do, care less about the environment, and take their money elsewhere.

We are watching what Maine's rules and regulations have done by attracting a foreign corporation to Gouldsboro for in-water salmon. The guy in charge has spent time in prison for financial swindling.

This is an important conversation and we the citizens of Maine deserve to have it.

I strongly urge you to pass LD 1146.

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