

Hello,

My name is Jeff Auger and I have worked in Maine's Aquaculture industry for over 9 years. I moved to Maine when I was 26, eager to start a career in the aquaculture industry. I have worked extremely hard, and am very proud of the industry I am a part of. There has been no bigger threat to my way of life than the currently proposed LD 1146.

LD 1146 affects all aquaculture operations, large and small. It is proposed by an organization that refuses to disclose its funding and originated from a wealthy landowner group opposing a oyster farm off their docks. That group has since used misinformation and scare tactics to pit working waterfront members against each other. We all work on the water and face the same environmental and logistical challenges that come with having mother nature dictate our office. LD1146 will cost the state hundreds of jobs. Our industry has done a tremendous job of attracting young professionals to the state at a time the rest of the economy has struggled. LD 1146 would raise application fees, rents, and delay in the review of applications. It also would allow for viewscape and aesthetics impacts to be considered in a lease application, exactly the complaint of the original property owners who founded this group.

Our leasing system is not broken. I have been part of 3 standard lease applications all of which have been altered or changed due to our strict process. We have built a very diverse resilient industry which we should be proud of. I support MAA and their efforts to find constructive solutions that address concerns while allowing Maine business to grow.

-Jeff Auger

Jeffrey Auger
Bath

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