

Senator Miramant, Representative McCreight and distinguished members of the Marine Resources Committee.

My name is Crystal Canney. I am the executive director of Protect Maine's Fishing Heritage Foundation.

We are an organization that supports lobstermen, fishermen, recreationalists, small aquaculturists and their concerns about the future of Maine's Coast. PMFHF is supporting LD 1146.

For the past two years we have attended over 50 aquaculture scoping sessions and hearings in person and more recently online, to listen, learn and grow as an organization. We hired the former director of the Maine aquaculture program several months ago as a consultant. He has brought additional expertise to our organization. At the forefront of our organization's goal is, "To work towards the best solution for the Maine coast and reduce conflict, with everyone being represented at the table. Develop a comprehensive plan that is well thought out for entire coast of Maine and all stakeholders."

PMFHF is pro-planning and collaboration. We believe this is best achieved by talking with all stakeholders, and revising outdated rules and regulations that have not been studied by state leadership in more than 17 years. 17 years since there was a comprehensive review of one of Maine's most important natural resources - the Maine coast! This resource is a public trust. Maine must develop a strategic vision and long-term mariculture plan, with an eye towards what is best for the entire state, not just one well lobbied industry.

Historically, in 2006 the maximum aquaculture lease size was changed from 250 acres to 1,000 acres aggregated. This decision was approved without lobster industry representation. In "the following report", that accompanied the bill, it stated that lobster industry representation needed to be included. This was ignored and the only representation was the aquaculture industry. A similar situation happened in 2017 – a bill to increase the length of time you could hold a lease went from 10-20 years. All approved with No lobster industry representation.

Every person whether they be lobstermen and women, fishermen or aquaculturists have committed significant money in their respective industry. They buy boats, gear, seed, and more. Yet only an aquaculturist is allowed to lease the ocean. Conversely, a lobster license reverts to the state. This means that an aquaculturist may sell their lease on the open market to anyone in or out of the state of Maine or even to someone outside of the United States. The greatest concern for a small aquaculturist today is that industrialized aquaculture will ultimately put them out of business. This is no longer a fledgling industry, like it was when the rules were first established.

Currently at the foot of Acadia national park a corporation wants to put in net pen salmon for over 100 acres. This is just the beginning of losing our coast to large industrial aquaculture.

Lobstermen, small aquaculturists and year-round residents are now very in tune with what has happened and how it has happened. They are all asking more and more questions about how Maine's rules and regulations have set the table for large scale aquaculture and the potential to crowd out the little guy and rob fertile fishing ground from lobstermen that have been fished for generations.

PMFHF supports a statewide conversation with all the players at the table – lobstermen, fisherman, clammers, organizations that support all of them, big aquaculture and smaller aquaculture. We invite each of you to join the conversation. It is so very important that we do all we can together, to preserve and protect the beautiful coast of Maine for everyone.

On a final note,

There are lobstermen who are out working today who have submitted testimony and can't be here. It's worth noting that they come from a variety of areas. I would like to mention just a few.

Tony Bray from Deer isle – Stonington – who is concerned about rapid growth and wants to have a statewide conversation.

Julie Eaton – Stonington – Concerned about the oversight regarding aquaculture.

Cody Nunan. – Cape Porpoise - Concerned about 1,000 acres"

Jake Thompson, Vinalhaven - Believes there should be a residency requirement

Josh Trundy Sorrento - 1,000 acres

Ernie Burgess, Chebeague – Concerned about losing more bottom and transferability

James West, Sorrento – Supports small aquaculture, concerned about growth and oversight.

Rock Alley, Jonesport - 1,000 acres is too big, concerned about out of state corporations and oversized influence.

Thank you.

Thank you and I am happy to answer any questions.

