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Brunswick

Senator Miramant, Rep. McCreight and members of the Marine Resources Committee. My name is Emily Coffin and I am representing both myself and my father, Jim Coffin. I'm hoping to share the perspective of two fishermen who were beset by the arrival of an industrial and unfriendly aquaculture set up. This past summer, Running Tide Technologies set up their generator and floating upwellers in the Narrows where we fish.

My father reached out to Running Tide repeatedly, to inform them that their floats conflicted with his gear. After being told, more than once that their LPAs sat right on top of good fishing ground, they went ahead and put them there anyways. They did what they wanted, putting their upwellers right where they knew we fished, and right where the harbor master knew we fished. It was a very negative experience, especially compared to the great relationships we have with other local oyster men. Beyond the lack of respect shown by the multi-million dollar, venture capitalist funded company to the local, traditional way of life, is the idea of "too much." When my father and I were met with Running Tide's takeover, we were aghast. They wanted a lease, and a large one too. To us, and to many others, the idea of leasing the water, especially leasing hundreds of acres, is antithetical to what it means to be a waterman. This is a personal anecdote, but I know that it's happening all over the state and to other people who are used to making their living on the water. More and more fishermen are becoming anti-aquaculture. Something needs to be done; Limiting aquaculture expansion, at least for now, is imperative, so that those who regulate it can have time to consider what it means to lease the ocean and if so, how to do so responsibly.

Aquaculture is coming to Maine and rather than stopping it dead in its tracks, I want to be a voice of cooperation, but also of reason. I see so many parallels between the industrial agriculture in the Midwest and the upcoming industrial aquaculture coming to the Atlantic coast. From what we know about how devastating monoculture and mechanization can be for an environment like the American prairie and grasslands, I would hope that we can have the foresight to avoid the havoc that serious industry can bring to the pristine coast of Maine. As a young person who wants to spend their life in Maine, I want to look out for the waters I proudly call home.

As someone who has been personally affected by unrestrained aquaculture, I want to warn those in power of the discord that will come with more industrial set ups. Either commercially, environmentally, or interpersonally, large-scale aquaculture has the potential to ruin the things Mainers love about Maine. Where moneyed, metallic, limitless aquaculture exists, preservation, tradition, and family operations cannot. Thank you for listening and thank you for understanding.