

Libby Davis
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, Libby Davis, as a small business owner that directly supports the aquaculture industry oppose the bill LD 1146. Despite the misleading title, it is my assessment that these amendments outlined in LD 1146 discourage and disparage investment and growth in the aquaculture sector and will weaken Maine's working waterfronts. I also oppose ability to oppose aquaculture operations based solely on aesthetics and view scape. The current leasing and management system does not require such restrictive changes at this time. This bill was not designed with intent to bolster coastal economies but instead puts at risk the hard work myself and my colleagues have dedicated to building our businesses in the industry. The Covid-19 pandemic has highlighted the need for more opportunity, diversity and cross-collaboration that creates resiliency within the sector - not inhibits its success, as this bill does. It is my concern that this bill will raise application fees for farmers, cut jobs that will reduce the value and productivity of an aquaculture farm and tie up DMR staff in an unnecessary study that will further delay review of lease applications. I support the mission of the Maine Aquaculture Association (MAA) and their efforts to find solutions that address the concerns of the people, most affected in their daily lives by these policy changes. It is my belief that we should be creating more opportunities for expansion and growth for Maine aquaculture businesses that; promote sustainable food systems providing value and visibility to the Maine brand, inspire new waves of entrepreneurialism and innovation that create jobs inclusive to all demographics and, pays homage to our Maine heritage. Many thanks.