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April 12, 2021

Commissioner Patrick Keliher  
Department of Marine resources  
21 State House Station  
Augusta, Maine 04333-0021

Dear Commissioner Keliher,

As a Member of the DMR Aquaculture Advisory Council I wish to ask for your help in opposing a piece of pending legislation. LD 1146 "An Act To Protect Maine's Ocean Waters and Support Regulatory Oversight and the Long-Term Health of the Aquaculture Industry" will undo years of hard work by the legislature, DMR and DEP to develop rigorous, and comprehensive laws and regulations that balance the public trust, protect the environment and allow working waterfront communities to use aquaculture as a tool to diversify their economic base.

LD 1146 has multiple components any one of which would negatively impact the states aquaculture sector. I will not go through each component because I know your time is valuable. I do want to highlight one component of the bill that will impact not just growers but your own department as well. LD 1146 requires your department to conduct a series of stakeholder meetings and develop a strategic plan for the state. As you know the state has already done this multiple times over the last thirty years. In addition, Maine Seagrant is in the middle of doing this as we speak with the plan due to be delivered by the end of the summer. Your department's staff have been critical to that project and many of the recommendations of the report will be based on their suggestions. Directing the Department to conduct yet another series of stakeholder meetings and developing another plan is clearly designed to take Department staff away from their normal duties, slow down any lease application processing and give a platform to the anti-aquaculture campaigners.

LD 1146 appears to be intentionally vague on a number of issues and as such may appear less threatening that it actually is. What is clear however, is that LD 1146 fundamentally damage the state's aquaculture sector and will likely result in hundreds of lost jobs, hence, I ask that the department strongly oppose LD 1146.

Thank you for your consideration of these comments

Respectfully submitted,



Christopher Davis