



P.O. Box 1633 ~ Blue Hill, ME ~ 04614
~ www.fobhb.org ~

April, 9, 2021

Re:

LD 1146 An Act to Protect Maine's Ocean Waters and Support Regulatory Oversight and Long-term Health of the Aquaculture Industry.

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

I am writing, as board president of Friends of Blue Hill Bay (FOBHB), to urge your support of the passage of LD 1146. FOBHB was founded in 1999 with the mission of "conserving the natural ecology, traditional marine fisheries and unique aesthetic quality of Blue Hill Bay". Over the years we have worked diligently to ensure the resources of the bay continue to be sustainable for its many users and stakeholders. This has included supporting a working waterfront, advocating for sustainable marine resource harvesting and supporting aquaculture operations that are sustainable and who's operators prove stewards of their environment.

Unfortunately, some of the regulatory permitting framework has allowed aquaculture leases to essentially become privatized single use areas of a once public use waterway. And to allow the lease holder to operate with little oversight, particularly when it comes to the impact it has on the local environment.

Therefore, FOBHB supports several of the provisions of LD 1146 including:

- Increased oversight of aquaculture leases by the Maine DMR to ensure regulatory compliance with the requirements of the lease,
- Before a lease renewal the lessee must demonstrate a history of full compliance with the provisions of the lease,
- All the rights conveyed to the lessee will revert back to the State at the termination of a lease,
- All aquaculture leases greater than 5 acres will no longer be exempt from the Natural Resources Protection Act,
- Aquaculture lease size be limited to 50 acres with a cumulative total of no more than 100 acres,
- The term of an aquaculture lease be limited to no more than 10 years,
- And the DMR develop a strategic aquaculture plan that incorporates all the stakeholders in Maine who hold our waters as valuable resources to be managed for future generations.

Donald Eley
Friends of Blue Hill Bay, board president