

Matt Gerald
Bar Harbor

Senator Mirament, Representative McCreight, Honorable Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Marine Resources. My name is Matt Gerald . I live in Bar Harbor Maine. I am owner/CEO of Western Bay Oyster Company, Sweet Pea's Farm Store, and Consolidated Entropy. I am president of the Mount Desert Island Farmers Market and sit on the Bar Harbor Marine Resources Committee.

LD 1146 OUGHT NOT TO PASS.

My experience is as a sea/terrestrial farmer working on local food systems, as well as marine resources. It is abundantly apparent that rising sea temperature, ocean acidification and over exploitation has devastated the working waterfront economy in Maine. Many species are moving north into colder water or have been exploited to below commercially feasible populations. Aquaculture ,whether commercial or recreational , is sustainable, resource un-exploitive, and in many cases an engine of increased bio-diversity. For working-waterfront communities it is essential that aquaculture be protected and enhanced to provide long term stability to lease establishment and distribution markets. LD1146 is an opaque , dark money, attempt by riparian land owners who are loathe to co-exist with working waterfronts. The vagueness intentionally structured into this bill is nothing but worrisome. Currently the Maine DMR is underfunded and understaffed. The work they do is exemplary but the lease process is terribly backlogged. Rather than pass a bill that cloaks impairment of aquaculture process as "Long Term Health" , funding allocations to the DMR should be increased, as well as support for cooperating agencies such as the Cooperative Extension system. This bill is nothing but an attempt to gentrify coastal Maine at the expense of working waterfront communities.