

April 13th, 2021

Joint Standing Committee on Marine Resources
Cross Building, Room 206
Augusta, ME 04333

Senator Miramant, Representative McCreight, Honorable Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Marine Resources;

Thank you for providing me the opportunity to share my perspective with you this morning. My name is Hillevi Jaegerman, I live in Portland, and I am a manager of Wolfe Neck Oyster co. in Casco Bay. Today I ask you to vote 'ought not to pass' on LD 1146, 'An Act to Protect Maine's Ocean Waters and Support Regulatory Oversight and the Long-term Health of the Aquaculture Industry'.

I grew up in Portland. My first job ever was to lead touch tank demonstrations at the Children's Museum of Maine. I've worked in restaurants and businesses on the waterfront since highschool. I've known since I was young that I wanted to work on the water, and that love led me to get my undergraduate degree in Biology from Tufts University in 2012 with a focus on Marine Ecology. I returned to my home state and connected with the owner of Wolfe Neck Oyster Co, Mark Green, after graduation. Recently, I have been able to attend the University of New England in pursuit of a Master's degree in Ocean Food Systems. I have worked in aquaculture for five years; It is the most meaningful and fulfilling work that I have ever done.

While LD 1146 is titled and act "to protect" the health of the aquaculture industry, I am concerned that it would have the opposite effect on this industry. Already, the regulatory oversight is thorough, and comprehensive. There are already extremely effective systems in place to site, amend, and communicate about farm plans with all engaged stakeholders. We have wonderful relationships with our community- both on sea and on land.

I would like to help grow value and equity for my small business. Wolfe Neck Oyster Company offers profit sharing for its employees as well as ownership shares over time. We have gone from two employees to now six employees and half of us are women! Aquaculturists work hard to build their brand, market reach, and to grow their products to be some of the best in the world. Our oysters take three years to grow. LD 1146 especially concerns me because of the impacts it would create in limiting small and medium business growth and the vague wording of the bill surrounding transfers and renewals. These small businesses that provide good jobs to young people in Maine cannot weather the uncertainty of their own futures and simultaneously promise security for hard working Mainers.

Thank you for your consideration. I would be happy to comment further on any questions.

Hillevi Jaegerman
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