



April 12, 2021

The Honorable Dave Miramant, Senate Chair  
The Honorable Jay McCreight, House Chair  
Joint Standing Committee on Marine Resources  
Cross Office Building, Room 206  
Augusta, Maine 04333

**Re: Opposition to LD 1146**

Senator Miramant, Representative McCreight, Honorable Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Marine Resources, thank you all for your service to our state and the opportunity to come before you today. My name is Bill Keleher and I am CEO of Kennebec River Biosciences and reside in Topsham. I stand before you today to testify in strong opposition of LD 1146.

Kennebec Biosciences is an internationally recognized aquatic animal health and biosciences company located in Richmond. Since 1996, the company has provided diagnostic laboratory services and custom vaccines to the aquaculture sector, government agencies, and research institutions across the globe. Our dedicated professional staff, now around 15 and predominantly educated in Maine, works with a diverse set of clients with the goal of providing value to their operations. Kennebec Biosciences would not be the company we are today without the vibrant aquaculture sector we have here in Maine and are excited about the future as aquaculture continues to grow here in our state and throughout the US.

Our company is dependent on a dynamic aquaculture sector, one comprised of small, medium, and large companies. Maine is seen as model when it comes to the way it oversees aquaculture; whether it is the state's leasing system or the way it approaches aquatic animal health the state has a well-deserved reputation as a leader nationally and internationally. Now is not the time to divert limited resources away from practices that have served us well and would only empower special interests, and their unnamed financial backers, that have historically opposed aquaculture.

We all have a stake in seeing aquaculture succeed in Maine. It is the untold hours all of us spend working collaboratively to build a responsible and forward-looking sector; one that builds on our fisheries heritage and provides continued opportunities on the waterfront through aquaculture. Maine is getting it right despite what the detractors say and is the reason I remain optimistic about Maine's aquaculture sector and the important role it will play to address US food security in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

In closing, I ask that you oppose LD 1146 and vote this bill **ought not to pass** out of committee.

Sincerely,

CEO/President