



*"Refusing to go with the flow"*

April 13, 2021

Senator Miramant  
Representative McCreight  
Members of the Committee

Thank you for allowing me to testify today. My name is Greg Lambert, I am the Fresh Water Production Manager of US Operations for Cooke Aquaculture USA. I directly manage our freshwater operations in Maine and Washington State.

I grew up in Caribou Maine, graduated from the University of Maine Orono with a Degree in Wildlife Management and live in Fairfield, Maine with my wife and kids. I am a board member of the Maine Aquaculture Association and sit on the Department of Marine Resources Aquaculture Advisory Council.

I am here today to speak in opposition of Bill 1146. I am asking you to vote, ought not to pass.

Cooke Aquaculture has been operating in the State of Maine for 17 years. We have 3 freshwater hatcheries in Franklin, Somerset and Washington County. Sea sites in Washington and Hancock Counties and a processing facility in Machiasport, Maine.

Throughout this pandemic year the company has operated continuously, supplying fresh fish to American retailers such as Hannaford and others throughout the country.

Cooke has just over 200 direct employees in the State, using over 500 Maine based suppliers, such as electricians, welders, shipyards, mechanics and even computer programmers. Purchasing fuel, packaging, trucking services and a multitude of other items. We are constantly participating and funding Science and engineering-based research at the University of Maine. Since 1987, 34 years, the city of Eastport has held the Salmon festival, celebrating the aquaculture industry. In the area, people line up for site tours and salmon kabobs made from salmon raised in Cobscook bay.

America imported over 270 million pounds of farmed Atlantic Salmon in 2018 from Scotland, Norway, and Canada. Just across the border in Atlantic Canada there are over 1,500 people directly employed in salmon aquaculture. The lobster catch continues to rise and wealthy summer residents keep buying shorefront properties. Maine has so much opportunity in this aquaculture sector to diversify and enhance our working waterfronts in rural, coastal Maine communities, but Bills like 1146 would stifle investment and growth.

Maine has a regulatory system that is the envy of the world, it is studied and copied, globally. I know I am often asked about our regulations by other jurisdictions so they can be emulated, we do not need to study it again, others are studying us, and copying what we have done. We have a world leading system.

With funding from NOAA, Cooke Aquaculture is working collaboratively with the Penobscot Nation and Maine DMR for a wild salmon enhancement project on the Penobscot River. This will be the first wild salmon enhancement project of its kind in America, and as an avid fly fisherman myself I am pleased Cooke Aquaculture can participate in the program offering expertise and experience that does not exist in government agencies.

Specifically, Bill 1146's proposal to add more studies for site applications, substantially decrease the size of leases, add esthetic viewscape criteria and possibly eliminate transferability would all do exactly what they are designed to do... put all of the people in the industry out of work and increase seafood imports from other countries.

We are in a globally competitive market. Maine is by far the smallest salmon farming jurisdiction in the world supplying the United States, one of the biggest marketplaces on the planet. Our location, the quality standards of our operations and regulatory system gives us an advantage to compensate for our lack of size.

Globally, aquaculture is a growing industry, in America we continue to consume more farm raised seafood. In Maine the fisheries, tourism sector has operated and grown beside us for almost 40 years. We operate in a common resource, it is essential for our operations to have clean water and a clean environment. It is also essential that we have the regulatory certainty so we can continue to invest and attract more people into this industry.

Again, I ask you to vote , ought not to pass.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Greg Lambert". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Greg Lambert  
Manager – Freshwater Operations