



Community Shellfish Co.

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Testimony to Not Support LD 1146

April 12, 2021

The Honorable David Miramant, Senate Chair

The Honorable Jay McCreight, House Chair

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:

I am John Marsh. I am the owner and CEO of Community Shellfish Co. in Bremen, Maine. I am also a selectman of Bremen for the record. Thank you for providing me the opportunity to speak with you this morning. I am writing to you today to testify in strong opposition to LD1146, "An Act to Protect Maine's Ocean Waters and Support Regulatory Oversight and the Long-Term Health of the Aquaculture Industry".

Community Shellfish is a diversified shellfish company with operations in clam and clam processing, oyster aquaculture, as well as being a lobster harbor and dealer servicing approximately 25 lobster fishermen. We have 18 to 24 full-time and seasonal employees.

Maine's economy is built on three pillars: farming, forestry and fishing. These industries employ our citizens, connect us with the world, and give Maine its character and raison d'être. The marine industry is in the beginning of exciting new era; that of aquaculture. This is an industry that the world badly needs to supply quality protein foodstuffs in an ecologically safe and responsible manner. It is also an industry that is a godsend for Maine's maritime economy. As wild-caught fisheries become more volatile and unpredictable, aquaculture provides a solid and viable alternative income source for many Maine fishermen and working waterfront people.

Thus, this is a working waterfront issue, as well, frontline and center. As we all work to keep the waterfront vital, dynamic and viable, one of the most important new pieces to this is aquaculture. It utilizes existing infra-structure; it supplies many jobs and revenue streams for Maine people; it gives new life to what Maine stands for. Any law or regulation that unnecessarily impedes or hobbles it is

highly unproductive; especially one that is not replacive to the above in its effect. We do not want to become one of the many places on the Atlantic coast that have lost its way to alternative interests and development.

The Maine DMR already does an excellent job through insight and fairness to all parties when it comes to regulation of aquaculture. I know because I have a DMR aquaculture lease. They are strict and exacting in their pursuit of considering all stakeholders in their decisions. It has worked and will continue to do so.

I will end by highlighting aquaculture and working waterfront and their inter-relationship and the need to keep these entities strong. Working waterfronts are socio-economic hubs that provide good jobs to many people from the community, provide liquid markets for sea harvest and provide marine infra-structure and facilities to a multitude of fishermen and harvesters and, of course, they supply the world with quality Maine products. People depend on them for all these things. The winnowing or loss of these entities would be catastrophic for the economic health and fabric of Coastal Maine and the effects would be widespread. That is why supporting Maine aquaculture not hindering it at this pivotal time is important for all of us.

There are many challenges: Right whales, offshore wind development and changing environments are all threatening the ability to continue making a living on the water. LD 1146 is yet another threat that will make it more difficult to use aquaculture as a way to diversify income streams and adapt to some of the changes we are facing. Although the bill distinguishes between aquaculture operations that are above and below 5 acres, it will have impacts on all lease holders big and small. Please vote "Ought Not To Pass" on LD 1146. Thank you for your patience and willingness to listen to my concerns.

Sincerely,

John B Marsh

John Marsh
CEO
Community Shellfish Co.