

Greg Miller

Portland Oyster Company, written testimony to LD 1146

Senator Miramant, Representative McCreight, Honorable Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Marine Resources; thank you for providing me the opportunity to submit my written testimony to the committee. My name is Gregory Miller, I live in Cape Elizabeth, ME and I am the owner of Portland Oyster Company, Inc.

Our family, along with another family from Cape Elizabeth opened the Portland Oyster Company in 2017. We work hard to cultivate high quality, fresh Maine oysters. Our farm is located off the coast of Cape Elizabeth, we using floating gear, our oysters are naturally chipped and shaped by the waves.

I am presenting my written testimony to ask you to ought not to pass the bill.

The primary reasons I urge you to not pass this Bill are as follows:

1. The current aquaculture management system is not broken and I don't believe the State should spend hours of staff time and thousands of tax payers dollars to examine the concepts brought forward by this Bill and make the necessary changes to programs and laws. It will be a huge distraction and will prevent DMR staff from processing lease applications and managing the sector.
2. The Bill appears intended to force a lease holder to go all the way back through a new application and hearing process to either renew or transfer a lease. Lease renewal and transferability are critical components of the existing law. Without these characteristics, the value of my aquaculture business will be severely impacted which is unfair. Going back to the beginning of the leasing process will cost the state hundreds of thousands of dollars and clog the leasing system with unnecessary procedures that will slow down the processing of everyone's lease applications irrespective of whether they are big or small. I believe strongly that the intent of this Bill is to devalue aquaculture companies and slow down or stop growth in the aquaculture sector.
3. The existing leasing system is NOT broken and does not need improvement. The existing system is the product of over 40 years of legislative and public discussion. It has been repeatedly improved and refined. The Maine leasing system is seen as the gold standard in aquaculture management systems and has been copied by other states and jurisdictions such as Nova Scotia, Florida and North Carolina.

Thank you for listening to my thoughts and concerns and feel free to reach out if you have any follow-up questions regarding my testimony.

Greg Miller

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