

April 12, 2021

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

I appreciate the opportunity to present my view on LD1146 today. I am a full-time fisherman and I currently fish from Stockton Springs. This will be my third year farming kelp and I am concerned that this bill will challenge my, and my community's, ability to ensure that we have a supplemental income source from aquaculture in the face of an increasingly volatile lobster industry.

I have a young son, and I am acutely aware of the changes on the water. I want my son to have the option to go work on the water when he gets older. It's the life I lead and the life I love, and I want him to have the choice to be part of this important fishing heritage as he grows up. But the water is changing and the regulations on the lobster industry are making life on the water much more challenging. Aquaculture is a way for fishermen to use their assets (like their boats, their social capital on the water, their crew) to create a more reliable income source in the lobster off-season.

This bill could slow down the already lengthy leasing process and would take away important diversification opportunities for fishermen who direly need it at the moment. Requirements suggested in the bill like alternative site selection and visual impact studies could create so much work that it would, in essence, weed out any fishermen from moving forward in the leasing process – just as our future in the lobster industry becomes even more challenging.

I urge you not to pass this bill through the committee and, instead, work to help grow the industry that is providing essential diversification opportunities for our coastal fishermen.

Best,

Greg Perkins