

Zach Piper  
Hancock

Zach Piper, Hancock Lobsterman  
Testimony for LD 1146

Good Morning, Senator Miramant, Representative McCreight, and members of the Marine Resources Committee. My Name is Zach Piper, I am from Hancock and I want to testify in support of LD 1146.

I am a young fisherman making my living for the last decade in Frenchman's Bay. I have watched over the last few months as more and more people fisherman, lobstermen, and environmentalists have grown concerned about one particular lease – American Aquafarms which is proposing to put over 100 acres of net-pen salmon into Frenchman's Bay at the foot of Acadia National Park. This is an area I lobster heavily in as it is for countless other lobstermen who set traps and make their living.

Even more concerning than this one particular lease is what is happening in Maine. There is no question the way the state has set the rules for aquaculture that it is going way beyond the mom-and-pop aquaculture operations that I support. The state has chosen to accept and promote aquaculture in a way that is causing a lot of conflict on the water.

You can own up to 1,000 acres of the Maine coast for exclusive rights for aquaculture.

You can own that lease for 20 years.

You can transfer that lease to an individual, business or corporation without a public hearing. Of course, big corporations see Maine as a good deal – it's cheap for leasing – you can hold it for two decades and then sell it.

I want to be very clear that I support an owner/ operator model for aquaculture. It's good business. It keeps people employed and it's how we do business in Maine. But big scale corporations owning Maine waters – I am never gone to be for that and I ask this committee to work hard on this bill and recognize what's happened with the opportunity to make the ocean work for everyone.

Zach Piper.