

Jennifer Robinson
Pembroke

Senator Miramant, Representative McCreight and Honorable members of the Joint Standing Committee on Marine Resources; thank you for allowing me the opportunity to provide my written testimony. My name is Jennifer Robinson, I live in Pembroke and work out of Eastport and Machiasport. I am the Compliance Officer for Cooke Aquaculture USA, Inc and have worked in the Atlantic Salmon Aquaculture field for over 23 years. I will start by saying that I believe this bill ought not to pass for several reasons. First, to insinuate that the permitting process or regulatory oversight is broken and needs examining, I feel is a bit naïve, it has taken the industry a long time to get to where we are today and is a system that other regions look to for guidance. The bill also seeks the requirement for lease holders to have to completely reapply for a lease instead of the ability to renew or transfer leases. The Commissioner already has the ability to revoke a lease at any time if necessary. Having to reapply for an existing lease not only puts undo burden on the Department but also onto the company as it would lose the ability to farm that lease area for at least a couple of years. Also, the requirement for a NRPA permit would also bog down the system even more, it seems that this was added to the bill to get aesthetics into the criteria for siting. As it is, for finfish aquaculture, we are required to have a DMR Lease, a MEDEP Discharge Permit and a permit from the ACOE. Finally, the caps on individual leases and total lease acreage would severely impair our industry to utilize crop rotation and fallowing that we have been using for years and which supports a healthy environment. I personally have been involved with countless studies and stakeholder meetings, why would one assume that you are going to get a different outcome?
Thank-you for your time, Jennifer Robinson.