

Antonia Small
PORT CLYDE

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April 12, 2021

Dear Distinguished Members of the Marine Resource Committee,

We are writing today in OPPOSITION to LD 1146.

We own a small, relatively new, oyster farm in Port Clyde, Maine. We would like to add our voices to the rejection that the current system is somehow insufficient or broken. We have found the current leasing system to be thorough, rigorous, yet supportive of folks looking to earn a living on the coast of Maine.

We oppose the revocation of aquaculture's exemption to NRPA and Site development law because it will allow opponents to require visual impact and alternative site studies.

We have been exceedingly thoughtful in working with our neighbors, who have given their permission for our one intertidal LPA, to keep the visual impact understated. We have, however, also received ungracious comments from one waterfront owner about the view of the kelp farm in Deep Cove. If aesthetics become another opportunity for the NIMBY argument, we will lose everything we have worked for, building a family business for ourselves and our daughter, should she choose to keep farming.

Which leads to one of the more worrisome aspects to the proposed bill, that a lease reverts back to the state at the end of the term. And if one wanted to sell the farm? An oyster farm is situated on a location to take advantage of water quality, food, access, and the particular quality of that location. Much like the way a farmer works the land, we are working to grow a food product from the sea. It isn't arbitrary in the least. Building equity in a business, as well as the product itself, would be a moot point if our ability to grow both is revoked when the lease comes to term and a waterfront property owner has decided they are tired of the view.

This creates a great deal of trouble for a financial lender to consider an aquaculture farm of ANY scale as a good risk. You take away present potential as well as future enterprise in one fell swoop. If we could eat the view, maybe this wouldn't sting so terribly.

We fail to understand this push to create more hurdles to what is already a very detailed process. The coastal waters of Maine have supported fishermen and their families for generations, if we aren't careful, there is a slippery slope towards a quality of coastal gentrification suitable for only a wealthy few.

We support the current efforts of the Department of Marine Resources, the Maine Aquaculture Association, and all of those who have gone before us developing the aquaculture industry here in Maine. The constructive solutions are inherent in the current process as it stands today. Please take care in creating more barriers to an industry we'll need to feed our people in the 21st century.

Sincerely,
Antonia Small + John E. Cotton
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