

Hello, my name is Will Sullivan and thank you for listening to what I have to say today. I work for Inland Seafood, an employee owned company based out of Atlanta with offices in South Portland, Milbridge, Boothbay, Prospect Harbor, and Eastport. I manage the Maine shellfish program, and I work with harvesters and farmers along the coast. I am a father, husband, and I want to pass down a state of Maine I can be proud of. I am very much opposed to LD 1146.

Many Maine aquaculture businesses are family owned and operated. Farms provide jobs to eager individuals invested in advancing food accessibility and elevating the quality of seafood cultivated in Maine. Seafood is something that Maine has always been known for. Our oyster and shellfish industry has been expanding rapidly. We need more diverse products now than ever to meet consumer demand at restaurants, fish markets, and through e-commerce sites.

Maine's coastline is 3478 miles long, but only 12% of that is under public ownership. Private owners of oceanfront property in Maine have no issues going out to eat seafood; yet can't be bothered to see where their food comes from. LD 1146 would drastically lower the quality of shellfish grown along the coast of Maine. It will, if passed, decimate Maine's rising market share and glowing reputation. This threat to the future of aquaculture in Maine is real. We need to work more out on the water. We cannot restrict access to prime growing locations just because we may be ruining someone's view of the sea. What ever happened to wanting to know where your food comes from?

Maine has a tourism industry that is already showing how resilient it can be amid a global pandemic. LD 1146 would be a death blow to an already struggling aquaculture industry. Figuring out more ways to utilize the ocean to cultivate food for human consumption is extremely important. We should be utilizing more of the coastline in Maine than we already do to support growing demand for healthy food with minimal ecological impact. The Gulf of Maine is warming faster than 99% of the world's oceans, and we need to find alternatives to Lobster before it is too late. Aquaculture is a collection of efforts for a better future. We need a thriving working waterfront, and we need to work together to get there.