

As a lifelong resident of the state of Maine, a waterfront landowner, conservationist, and mariner, I write in staunch opposition to LD1146. The efforts behind this bill, including a misinformation campaign, are positioned to divide members of the working waterfront in order to benefit a few wealthy landowners.

The aquaculture permitting process is extensive and adequate to protect Maine's valuable natural resources. This process includes adequate evaluations of environmental impacts, shared usage evaluations, and public sessions/commenting review periods from the public. This process can take years and small aquaculturists cannot afford a longer process that will include an evaluation of viewscales, which is already adequately addressed in existing parts of the permitting process. The burden to aquaculturists and the Department of Marine resources will cost the state jobs and throttle a budding industry that is not only good for Maine people, but also good for the health of our waterways.

As the owner of a new, small oyster farm in Mid-coast Maine, I am excited by the responsible growth of this industry, an industry that could allow my son to be the fourth generation to work on the same body of water. Aquaculture is good for the coast of Maine; LD1146 is an effort to put the interests of a few above the greater good of the people who live and work on the Maine coast.

Eric Varney
Bath