

Francis M. Weld

April 8, 2021

To: The Committee on Marine Resources

From: Francis M. Weld

Re: Testimony in Support of An Act to Protect Maine's Ocean Waters and Support Regulatory Oversight and the Long-term Health of the Aquaculture Industry, LD 1146

Senator Miramant, Representative McCreight and distinguished members of the Marine Resources Committee. I am a resident of Northeast Harbor, a lifelong coastal mariner and a committed environmentalist. I received a master's degree from Cornell University, where I studied the economics of aquaculture. I am submitting testimony today in support of LD 1146.

The development of the aquaculture industry in Maine has reached a critical juncture. The decisions that we make today will have an indelible impact on our state's environment and economy and on our culture and legacy.

Our 3000 miles of coastline sustain the livelihoods of our iconic lobstermen, and they are home to the burgeoning development of small-scale shellfish and seaweed aquaculture.

The same permitting framework that enables pursuit of these low-impact aquaculture enterprises is available to industrial-scale practitioners whose proposed projects promise to be anything but low-impact. Such operations will change the economic playing field while ravaging the marine resources that others depend on.

It is time to review our current permitting regime and to decide both how we want to move forward and what we want to be known for.

This bill is a starting point that includes all voices in the conversation around Maine's ocean waters.

Developing a strategic aquaculture plan with input from leaders in the aquaculture, lobster, fishing, tourism and recreation industries, as well as experts from the environmental and water quality regulatory community will assure that all voices are heard, that uses and impacts are balanced and that the working waterfronts which give our coastal communities character and economic vitality are maintained.

I urge you to support this bill.

Respectfully submitted,

Francis M. Weld

Francis Weld
Northeast Harbor, ME

Hi. I am booked to testify live. I attach the text of what I intend to say. Thank you.