

Teagan White
Bar Harbor

To the Maine Marine Resources Committee,
My name is Teagan White and I oppose LD 1146, an ill-advised attempt to change a system that is not broken and would place undue burden on working class Mainers.

I have both applied for LPA licenses through the DMR and have been employed by a mussel and oyster farm. The DMR does not blindly accept applications - they reviewed my proposal and worked with me to change things that were problematic and outside of current regulations, which is exactly how state agencies should work. The farms that I work for are mom and pop businesses that would not be able to support me with the increased restrictions proposed in this bill.

I find the revocation of NRPA exemptions to be the most insulting piece of this bill. To allow landowners the power to fail lease applications based on impediments to their "view shed" is a classist, out of touch notion. If a small dairy farmer erected a grain silo across the road from that same land owner, they would not have the power to deny the farmer the ability to farm. Someone who can afford shorefront property (especially in my area of MDI) and is displeased with seeing working people doing what they love, is usually a rich, retired person. The inequality here is stark.

I suspect the proposed size restrictions are an out of touch way to insure that aquaculture in Maine stays small scale. Firstly, 50 acres of bottom looks very different depending on the species, and so a blanket limit of 50 acres could have an averse impact on say, a small scale mussel farmer. That wouldn't be a farm plot, it would be more of a backyard tomato garden. I worked for the DeKongings (bottom culture mussel farmers) last year when the pandemic exploded. They were big enough that they were able to support me for a number of months after their sales dried up. Had I been working on a 20 acre oyster farm, that would not have been the case. Maine needs a healthy mix of sizes to be a sustainable option into the future.

I am outraged by the content of this bill. Lobster fishing isn't an option for everyone, and aquaculture is a wonderful alternative to carry on the traditions of working waterfront. It makes me happy and is how I make a living. Please consider voting against LD 1146. Thank you for your time,

Teagan White