

Testimony in Opposition of LD 1146. "An Act to Protect Maine's Ocean Waters and Support Regulatory Oversight and the Long-Term Health of the Aquaculture Industry." Sponsored by Representative Alley

April 13<sup>th</sup>, 2021

Senator Miramant, Representative McCreight, Honorable Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Marine Resources, thank you for providing me an opportunity to testify before you this morning, asking you to vote LD 1146 "ought not to pass".

My name is Max de Koning, I live in Lamoine and my family and I own and operate Acadia Aqua Farms, LLC.

I came to Maine when I was 5 years old and attended grade and high school on MDI. In school vacations and on weekends I have worked on our family mussel farm and learned the ropes as an apprentice by doing the work under supervision. I did not want to borrow money to go to college, so I chose to stay and work my way in the family company. Now I can build a future here over many years. Knowing that we can transfer the farms to my brother and me when I have earned it, is especially important to me. I am proud of my family's long farming heritage and want to continue this tradition. The transfer of the leases also means that the younger members of the family more likely stay in the business and the knowledge learned over the generations is transferred to the next generation as well. It takes years to learn how to farm each site and they all have different characteristics, that you only see by being there day after day. I run the boat and crew for the harvesting, as well as manage the farms with my Dad.

I am the sort of guy who wants to work on the water and for myself. I like this life and I like to work hard to earn my money. These kinds of jobs need this work ethic. I am 21 years old and there are lots of guys up and down the coast like me. We need there to be entry opportunities that do not take a huge investment to make a start. I was lucky and had a family who already do this, but it is possible to start a small aquaculture farm on your own here, with the right skills and guidance. We just need the State to support that a bit and not let bills like this try to shut it down. Aquaculture needs to be one of the opportunities that young people in coastal towns have, to earn a living, without having all the barriers that this bill wants to put in place.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Max de Koning

