

leslie harlow
Hancock

Leslie Harlow
Owner/Operator
Ironbound Restaurant
Hancock, Maine
207-266-0621
leslieharlow123@gmail.com

The State of Maine enacted legislation in years past commonly known as "Maine's Working Waterfront". In 2019 Maine's Congresswoman Chellie Pingree, with bi-partisan support, was able to successfully pass "Keep America's Waterfronts Working Act" as legislation. The Coast of Maine was used as an example of how important it has become to protect harbors and fisheries nationwide from over-development not related to working waterfronts.

Today before you is consideration of LD1146. This "Concept Bill" should remain as a concept, and only that. Never to be adopted as legislation.

Maine is made up of over 3,500 miles of coastal shorefront filled with lively fishing harbors where jobs and commerce successfully interplay contributing to hundreds of millions of dollars of revenue for all involved. Only 25 miles of these waters are made up of active fishery activities on the shore's edges. Woven into all of this are shorefront homeowners who are fortunate enough to own these properties. Most of these homeowners value and take great interest in watching the activity of the working waters where oyster harvesters, lobstermen and other aquaculture operations are working hard making a living.

LD1146 threatens one facet of this marine activity: aquaculture. As a restaurant operator (Ironbound in Hancock) we purchase much of our seafood offerings from local, Maine oyster harvesters and fishermen. This bill, if enacted, threatens our opportunity to tell the Maine story of successful aquaculture and fisheries. In turn, it erodes the partnership through Maine's working waterfronts legislation and those working on the sea.

LD1146 is a "Concept Bill" which was written by a paid professional who is working with groups of Maine shorefront owners who perfectly fit the description of NIMBY's: Not In MY Back Yard shorefront owners. This is what is commonly referred to as an effort backed by "Dark Money".

Simply put: these particular homeowners do not want to witness Mainers who work on the water making a living as they quietly manage their stocks which is overseen by Maine's regulatory body of the Department of Marine Resources. Which, incidentally, effectively oversees all leases and activities of aquaculture.

The passing of this Concept Bill, potentially becoming legislation, threatens the livelihood of not only Mainers who work in aquaculture as oyster, seafood, mussel and other harvesters, but value added business as restaurants and seafood purveyors that sell aquaculture products.

The passing of LD1146 defies all Maine logic in a state where "Working Waterfront" legislation successfully paved the way for national legislation for Working Waterfronts. There is too much at stake for the growing aquaculture industry, supported by not only the Maine Department of Marine Resources, but UMO's Darling Center, where innovative technologies are being invested in.

Maine takes pride in our independent entrepreneurs on and off the water from restaurants to seafood purveyors to innovative technology that supports the Maine aquaculture industry. Do the right thing: do not support LD1146.