

I am writing as a co-owner of a small aquaculture farm, and as a professional municipal planner. I am a graduate of the UMAINE School of Forestry, and the Muskie School of Public Service where I earned a Master's Degree in Community Development & Planning. I understand the impacts of development to local landscapes and shared water resources. I understand how regulatory policy is necessary to mitigate those impacts.

I am opposed to the proposed LD 1146 as I do not believe that as written it involves a sound planning process to develop rules that regulate existing and compliant aquaculture uses. The proposed legislation does not identify a purpose or need that is being unmet by the current regulatory framework, it does not align with existing state regulations (SLODA is applicable to development of 20 acres or more, where this proposal enacts SLODA at 5 acres), nor did it involve the many stakeholders that are necessary to craft sound policy.

Maine has a long tradition of protecting land uses that have created our identity as Mainers. There is an inherent conflict with the desire for a "private" water view and the protection of the working waterfront where there is a need for food production. This is analogous to, and the nexus for the "right to farm" laws that have protected the farms and farmers that we so value today.

LD 1146 appears to be a reactive approach to allay fears of a "new" use where there is a false perception that it is unregulated. It dismisses the good work that is being conducted by the Maine Department of Marine Resources, and adversely impacts existing farms that have forged a viable and sustainable industry for Maine.

Entering into rule making with a conclusion predetermined is a poor approach. I strongly urge the committee to gain a better understanding of the existing conditions, in the current regulatory framework and the practices of the aquaculture industry prior to engaging in a process that uses a starting point that is unfounded.