

Cameron Barner
Love Point Oysters

My name is Cameron Barner and I am co-owner of Love Point Oysters in Freeport, Maine. I am here to testify in strong opposition to LD 1211.

I oppose LD1211 not only because there are NO representatives from the aquaculture industry on the commission, and not only because it would further slow the growth my business and those like it, but primarily because this is yet another veiled attempt to halt the growth of the nascent but promising aquaculture industry in the State of Maine.

I am an oyster farmer, therefore, by definition I am a proponent of regulation that ensures the lasting health of the environment in my marine community and beyond. I even believe in tools like marine spatial planning as a way to safely and responsibly remove barriers to growth for small businesses like mine. But this bill is none of those things. This bill has one goal in my mind, and that is to pause and ultimately dismantle the currently well-functioning aquaculture leasing process. A process that has been repeatedly improved and refined over 40 years of legislative and public discussion. A process that already requires the involvement of local municipal authorities, such as harbor masters and in many cases, shellfish conservation commissions, and is designed to involve ALL stakeholders through multiple hearings and scoping sessions. It is an intensely rigorous process that can take well over 2 years to complete.

If LD 1211 passes it will eat up more time and resources from the already underfunded and overworked DMR staff. It will undoubtedly add years to the leasing process and ultimately force more marine businesses to shutter their doors. As I've said in testimony before, aquaculture is a very hard way to make a living, and the state and its municipalities need to be doing everything they can to bolster the growth of this industry. So I urge you, please vote Ought NOT to Pass on LD 1211. Thank you again for your attention.

Respectfully,
Cameron Barner