

Rachel Bishop  
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May 3, 2021

The Honorable David Miramant, Senate Chair  
The Honorable Jay McCreight, House Chair  
Joint Standing Committee on Marine Resources  
Cross Building, Room 206  
Augusta, ME. 04333

Senator Miramant, Representative McCreight, Honorable Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Marine Resources:

Thank you for providing me the opportunity to submit testimony this morning. My name is Rachel Bishop. I am the owner of Frenchboro Kelp Company, Frenchboro Maine.

I stand in strong opposition to LD 1211, "A Resolve, To Create the Study Group to Research Balancing Development and Conservation in Maine's Coastal Waters and Submerged Lands."

LD 1211 establishes a 25-member commission to review existing shoreland zoning, coastal waters and submerged lands laws in Maine. As written, there is no provision for representation by aquaculturists on the Commission. To create a commission that would directly affect an industry, with no opportunity for that industry to represent itself is unconscionable.

LD 1211 will trigger the most sweeping review of existing marine resource laws in over 40 years, and is a back door way to take another try at pushing through legislation that you just defeated (LD 1146). This new law would add a tremendous burden to the already multi-layered permitting and leasing procedures currently in place for aquaculture. I believe adding more hoops for people to jump through is both unnecessary and in direct opposition to the State's widely purported support of this new industry. Land farming has no such legislation, and no such processes in place, why is sea farming so different?

The existing aquaculture leasing and environmental monitoring system actually works very well. The existing system is the product of over 40 years of legislative and public discussion. It has been repeatedly improved and refined. Maine is seen as the gold standard in aquaculture management systems and has been copied by other states and jurisdictions around the world. LD 1211 was meant to address far different issues in the marine arena, and has no place addressing non-existent "problems" in the aquaculture industry.

LD 1211 creates yet another unnecessary round of study commission on how Maine's Marine resources are managed. In just the aquaculture sector, Maine has conducted 23 studies over the last 35 years, 13 of which have focused on policy issues around aquaculture development and the leasing system. Maine Sea Grant is conducting another statewide study right now that includes significant input from people in the industry. The results of that study will be released later this summer.

Thank you for your patience and willingness to listen closely to those of us who make our living on the water, helping preserve Maine's endangered working waterfronts and diversifying Maine's marine industries. Please vote Ought NOT to Pass on LD 1211.  
Respectfully,

Rachel Bishop