



**Testimony to the Committee on Marine Resources
*Opposition to LD 1211***

May 4, 2021

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Senator Miramant and Representative McCreight, Distinguished Members of the Committee, my name is Hugh Cowperthwaite, and I am the Senior Program Director of the Fisheries & Aquaculture Program at Coastal Enterprises Inc., headquartered in Brunswick. I reside in Falmouth. On behalf of CEI, I am testifying today to express our organization's 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."

Coastal Enterprises, Inc. (CEI) is a private, nonprofit Community Development Corporation (CDC) and Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI) based in Brunswick, Maine. CEI was founded in 1977 to develop job-creating natural resources and small business ventures in rural and coastal regions of Maine. CEI integrates financing, industry expertise, and policy solutions to help grow good jobs, environmentally sustainable enterprises, and shared prosperity in Maine and other rural regions.

CEI has a 40-year track record of supporting Maine's commercial fishing and aquaculture businesses. We do this by providing business services including free business counseling and technical assistance, and by making loans and investments in those marine businesses wishing to start or expand.

LD 1211 will trigger the most sweeping review of existing marine resource laws in over 40 years. These laws have carefully been put in place over the years and a top-down review is simply not necessary.

LD 1211 establishes a 25-member commission to review existing shoreland zone, coastal waters and submerged lands laws in Maine. There is no proposed representation for aquaculture on the Commission. This should be a red flag for the Marine Resources Committee to see that the Commission is a clear attempt to exclude members of the aquaculture industry - the thriving businesses who obey the existing rules and regulations already in place.

LD 1211 will force the Department of Marine Resources to use valuable staff time and resources on "yet another study" that will cripple the leasing system with an unnecessary review.

CEI continues to invest in a sector we believe in. Aquaculture is a powerful contributor to the diversification of the economic base of Maine's marine economy. If implemented, LD 1211 will



create major hurdles to an industry that is already operating in an extremely restrictive environment.

At this fragile time for many of our natural fisheries resources, the State of Maine should be supporting and preserving aquaculture's growth - not building up more barriers to its success.

On behalf of CEI, I thank you for your consideration of our testimony.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "Hugh Cowperthwaite". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Hugh Cowperthwaite
Senior Program Director, Fisheries and Aquaculture