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To the Members of the Marine Resources Committee,

This year marks the 38th year in business for this company. Throughout this time we have watched and participated in so many panels, commissions and other efforts to “study” aquaculture in Maine that we, literally, cannot recall them all. We do not need another such effort to reveal what we already know: that how Maine does aquaculture is respected far and wide as one of the best; that Maine has a system of balancing the Public Trust with the needs of the industry and balancing economics with environment.

It might be useful to instead examine if we are staffing the aquaculture department adequately to timely complete their responsibilities and whether aquaculture receives enough recognition and support as the economic driver and youth attracting and retaining occupation it is. Further, we might gain a better understanding of the number of “traditional” fishermen who are now aquaculturists or supplement their income as valued employees or vendors to the industry. Perhaps we should be examining the manner and the rate at which we, who earn our living on the water, are being chased inland by those who bring the riches of the city to forever change our coastal communities by depleting and encroaching on our working waterfronts.

Men and women working on aquaculture farms have become as quintessential and ubiquitous as lobstermen and other fishermen along our coast enriching the color and spirit of what Maine is. Please recognize the effort of LD 1211 for what it is and vote Ought Not to Pass.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lori A. Howell".

Lori A. Howell