



# Community Shellfish Co.

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## Testimony to Not Support LD 1211

May 1, 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:

I am John Marsh. I am the owner and CEO of Community Shellfish Co. in Bremen, Maine. I am also a selectman of Bremen for the record. Thank you for providing me the opportunity to submit this testimony to you this morning. My purpose is to express my strong opposition to LD1211, "A Resolve, To Create the Study Group to Research Balancing Development and Conservation in Maine's Coastal Waters and Submerged Lands".

As a matter of description, my company is a diversified shellfish company with operations in clam and clam processing, oyster aquaculture, as well as being a lobster harbor and dealer servicing approximately 25 lobster fishermen. We have 20 to 25 full-time and seasonal employees.

As I have stated previously, Maine's economy is built on three pillars: farming, forestry, and fishing. These industries employ our citizens, connect us with the world, and give Maine its character and raison d'etre.

The marine industry is in the beginning of exciting new era; that of aquaculture. This is an industry that the world badly needs to supply quality protein and vegetable foodstuffs in an ecologically safe and responsible manner. It is also an industry that is a godsend for Maine's maritime economy. As wild-caught fisheries become more volatile and unpredictable, aquaculture provides a solid and viable alternative income source for many Maine fishermen and working waterfront people.

My opposition to this bill comes from the fact that it proposes to dismantle and destroy a system and a group of legislation that already works extremely well in its effect of balancing, regulating, and fostering fair and even-handed access to the state's marine resource. It is an efficient and time-tested system that

has allowed for valuable and timely development of new marine industries while protecting the rights and access of non-maritime parties. Why destroy this system and network to re-shuffle the deck and risk throwing well established systems into disarray and dysfunction; all at the detriment to working people and established Maine businesses? As they say, if it is not broken, don't fix it.

As we all work to keep the maritime resource vital, dynamic, and viable, one of the most important new pieces to this is aquaculture, as previously mentioned. It utilizes existing infra-structure; it supplies many jobs and revenue streams for Maine people; it gives new life to what Maine stands for. Any law or regulation that unnecessarily impedes or hobbles it is highly unproductive; especially one that proposes no reasonable alternative. We do not want to become one of the many places on the Atlantic coast that has lost its way to alternative interests and development at the extreme detriment to core values.

The Maine DMR already does an excellent job through insight and fairness to all parties when it comes to regulation of commercial fishing and aquaculture. They are tireless, strict, and exacting in their pursuit of considering all stakeholders in their decisions. It has worked and will continue to do so. To contemplate encumbering this agency with new laws and regulations that are not connected to actual day to day realities is irresponsible, overburdensome to an entity already stretched on resources, and potentially catastrophic.

Of course, I do not oppose positive and fair change and improvement of existing laws and institutions, but the purpose and essence of this bill and the celerity by which it was constructed and presented is not correct or fair to the majority of stakeholders of our maritime resource as representation and purpose has not been properly vetted or disclosed. To enact this bill would be extremely risky and dangerous to a large percentage of Maine people and any missteps would reverberate for years to come.

I hope that all of us who live and work on the Maine coast can walk forward into the future together in the spirit of fairness and prosperity for all. I believe we can, but it will take a steady hand from our elected officials and lawmakers as pressure from outside and alternative interests increases.

Sincerely,

*John B Marsh*

John Marsh  
CEO  
Community Shellfish Co.