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I write in favor of LD 1211, To Create a Study Group to Research Balancing Development and Conservation in Maine's Coastal Waters and Sumerged Lands.

Maine's Coastal waters are "prime real estate". Investors are flocking from all over the world to build in and use the waters (and, by natural effect, the air). "The State of Maine owns submerged land below the mean low-water line, out to three nautical miles, and holds this land in trust for public use. The state also has authority and public trust responsibility to manage coastal waters out to three nautical miles."

What does it mean to hold the land in trust for public use?

Here in Frenchman Bay we have witnessed this first hand over recent years- industrial scale activities, which would be subject to far more stringent zoning requirements on land, can be built within the waters of the Bay without input from the surrounding communities who share the air and water.

As a local medical practioner, I am especially aware of the dangers of pollution to our own health and the health of the ecosystem. I have lived near Frenchman Bay my whole life, and became alarmed as I watched the black diesel emitting from the smoke stacks of multitudes of enormous cruise ships, day after day, just a few miles away across the bay. I cared for people living in the surrounding communities- they themselves couldn't tell what was billowing over their heads and into their lungs. Then a Mega cruise ship port was proposed for the area. That project would have brought even more ships/pollution to our ecosystem. Those of us living nearby had no say in the proposal.

Now industrial scale (in the water) salmon farming is proposed for two areas in the bay, when built it will be the biggest such "farm" in the world (company quote), multiple times bigger than any other such technology anywhere. The air and water pollution potential is enormous. We who live around the bay, or use the bay for our livelyhoods, can make comments, but are not part of the regulatory process- there is no "zoning". Bays are shared resources, and each area is unique.

Many other bays and near shore areas in Maine face similar dilemmas. Our environment is our most precious asset.

We need a new more local structure to help the State of Maine balance these conflicting forces.

Those who will say it is working fine are wrong, or blind to the issues facing the Gulf of Maine, our traditional fisheries, and our local communities.

This issue deserves a study group, that is the least we can do.