

Good morning. My name is Eric Oransky of Brunswick, Maine. I represent Maine Ocean Farms, an oyster farm in Freeport, my business partner and our employees. Thank you for the opportunity to speak in opposition to LD 1211.

For the second time in one month, I find myself here testifying in front of the Marine Resources Committee in order to defend my business, my livelihood and Maine's working waterfront from short sighted, outside interests with their mis-information and professional lobbyists who are seeking to make the aquaculture industry and it's regulatory oversight so tedious, expensive and volatile that it is no longer worth investing time, energy and money in.

In order to be here this morning, during the busiest time of our season and make the voice of small, local Maine aquaculture heard I put in a 15-hour day yesterday and canceled a Doctor's appointment this morning. I shouldn't have to fight constantly to defend the business that we worked so hard to build against the threat of changing regulations that in spite of what the proponents of this bill claim are not designed to protect Maine's working waterfront. Further delays, and more duplicative studies will have the designed effect to further slow-down the leasing process, deter new entrants to the industry and stifle the return on the sizable financial investment we, who are already in the industry have made out of our own pockets, likely forcing many small aquaculture operations out of business while the proposed committee deliberates.

The state of Maine's Legislature tasked the DMR with managing the state's waters and overseeing the leasing process given a set of criteria designed to responsibly grow the state's aquaculture industry. Maine's regulations and oversight are looked to as the "golden standard" for marine resource management in our country. We do not need another study committee to fix a process and system that are not broken. Especially a committee that is designed to marginalize the aquaculture and commercial fishing industries by giving them little to no representation on the proposed commission while instead giving power to outside interests or wealthy regions and communities who oppose aquaculture and the working waterfront.

I urge you to again, as with LD1146 to vote, ought not to pass on LD 2111 and send the clear message to the aquaculture industry, the commercial fishing industry, the state's working waterfront and the outside special interests proposing this bill that the state of Maine and our legislature support the hardworking people who spend their days on the water, as Mainers have done for centuries and let us get back to work growing and catching the best seafood in the country.

Thank you,
Eric Oransky
Partner, Maine Ocean Farms