

Joe Porada
Hancock

Dear Committee on MARINE RESOURCES,

I am writing in firm opposition to LD 1211,

“Resolve, To Create the Study Group To Research Balancing Development and Conservation in Maine's Coastal Waters and Submerged Lands”

My name is Joe Porada. I am a shellfish harvester, beginner and past aquaculturist and Chair of The Frenchman Bay Regional Shellfish Committee.

Having been through two lease processes of my own and having attended several others, I can attest to the rigorous process now involved in attaining an aquaculture lease. The process in place now and as it has evolved over the years serves The State of Maine very well. One of my lease proposals took 4 years and over 30 hours of hearings. Much discovery be me and all aquaculturists is done before we even do a pre-application hearing let alone sit down to write the finished lease proposal itself. We ALL research or siting choices in great depth to comply with all rules, regulations, wildlife and environmental concerns. We all pay strict attention to avoid undo and or unreasonable interference with traditional fisheries, riparian ingress/egress and navigation. We work with DMR, many riparian owners, towns, Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, The Army Corp of engineers to meet all necessary and reasonable conditions throughout.

The Department of Marine Resources has and is working to better the program on all levels. With this bill's suggestion, we see layers of redundancy pushed at a amply working program. Quoting a communication from another concerned aquaculturist, “There have been 23 studies carried out in the last 30 years or so surrounding policy of AQ and there is one running right now spearheaded by Sea grant, creating a 10-year road map for the future of Aquaculture in Maine. This current study has talked with a broad range of people including Crystal Canney's group. This study is due to report out in August. I guess we have to ask ourselves why another study is needed right now?”

I note, this proposed committee mandates NO Aquaculture folks at all. It does mandate groups and individuals that are known aquaculture opponents and some often called “NIMBYS”. I have seen many in such groups, including town officials manipulate, fabricate and disinform those concerned in lease processes. In my case, one monied riparian owner actually placed mooring in close proximity to my proposed lease tract thinking it would stop my going forward relative to navigation. Others pushed the idea that the lease oyster gear would create an environmental hazard and displace and or kill wildlife. Several Biologists, including then DMR's own Jon Lewis attested to the fact none of these things were true.

So, without further belaboring the point, this LD 1211 serves no real purpose other than to make it more difficult to get a lease, is utterly redundant, suggests those that know little of the science predominate the decision process, creates the likelihood folks without large money reserves and time (I'm 63 and would like to get a small lease before I die.) won't apply, allows heavy deciding input from the gentrified(ing) riparian owners concerned mainly with their view shed over and above working Maine Waterwomen/men having the opportunity to make a living on the water as we have always done. This LD1211 is a thinly veiled ploy initiated by some that have been unable to prevail under current rule and regulation.

I urge you all to vote “Ought Not To Pass” on this bill! We have enough, by far, layers of protection and rigorous process now to insure best practices in environmental sustainability, wildlife wellbeing, aquaculture, fisheries and working waterfront coexistence.

Thank you All for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Joe Porada.