

May 4, 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:

Thank you for providing me the opportunity to speak in opposition to LD 1211. My name is Phoebe Walsh, and I am a resident of Portland and an employee of Basket Island Oyster Company.

LD 1211 is a threat to my livelihood and a threat to what makes Maine special. This bill establishes a 25-member commission to review existing shoreland zone, coastal waters and submerged lands laws in Maine. As an environmentalist, I often support bills that address the balance between conservation and development. However, with LD 1211, there is NO representation for aquaculture on the Commission. Maine cannot boast abundant seafood and idyllic harbors while marginalizing aquaculturalists and fishermen.

Furthermore, LD 1211 is another attempt at trying to push through legislation that you literally just defeated (LD 1146). Proponents of LD 1146 are pushing hard for LD 1211 because it will give them a vehicle to submit legislation in the next session. Democracy was exercised with LD 1146. Please hear us again.

Finally, the existing aquaculture leasing and environmental monitoring system is NOT broken and does not need “improvement”. If anything, DMR needs more resources to do its current job, not be burdened with significant layers of permitting or leasing procedures or the need to engage with multiple “bay management” groups. The existing system is the product of over 40 years of legislative and public discussion. It has been repeatedly improved and refined. I have a master’s in Ocean Food Systems and I have witnessed the world’s admiration for Maine’s aquaculture management systems. We have a gold standard here, one that is copied by other states and jurisdictions around the globe.

Thank you to the committee for your patience and willingness to listen to those who make our living on the water. We know that working waterfronts are not a given and will be lost if not fought for. Please vote Ought NOT to Pass on LD 1211. Thank you and I would be glad to answer any questions.

Respectfully,
Phoebe Walsh