

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

### **Testimony LD 1211**

Senator Miramant, Representative McCreight, honorable members of the Committee, my name is Steve Zimmerman, I live in Newcastle and I am the Chief Operating Officer of Mook Sea Farm, located on the Damariscotta River. I oppose LD 1211.

My family and I moved to Maine 5 years ago to participate in and help grow Maine's aquaculture industry. Mook Sea Farm has recruited numerous employees, from within Maine as well as outside of Maine, who are also passionate about aquaculture and the development of Maine's working waterfront. If LD1211 were to pass it would significantly impact the progress of Maine aquaculture. It would be a redundant study aimed at slowing the leasing process.

LD 1211 aims to establish regional management authorities. This will be a dramatic departure from current law and will add significant layers to any permitting or leasing procedure.

Regionalization will decrease DMR's ability to ensure consistent and fair management of ALL state waters and resources and place a tremendous strain on DMR staff as they engage with multiple "bay management" groups in a fragmented system. Maine's existing aquaculture leasing system will grind to a halt.

The current lease law is the product of over a dozen studies and revisions. Maine Sea Grant is currently conducting another statewide study that includes significant stakeholder input. The results of that study will be released later this summer. Apart from the bad idea of regional management authorities, it is unlikely that another task force created under LD 1211 will develop any new policies or proposed regulations that have not already been thoroughly discussed in Maine.

The truth is the current system works. It is the product of careful consideration of over 40 years of legislation, studies, and public hearings. Maine's aquacultural management system is a model that other states consider a gold standard. Let us not waste precious time and money studying ways to fix something that is not broken.

I want to thank the committee for your time and patience listening to this testimony, and your consideration in supporting the advancement of Maine's aquaculture industry. Please vote Ought NOT to Pass on LD1211.