

May 4, 2021

The Honorable David Miramant, Senate Chair

The Honorable Jay McCreight, House Chair

Joint Standing Committee on Marine Resources

Senator Miramant, Representative McCreight, Honorable Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Marine Resources:

Thank you for providing me the opportunity to speak this morning. My name is Fiona de Koning. I am the owner of Acadia Aqua Farms and live in Bar Harbor.

I stand before you today to testify in strong opposition to LD 1211,

The idea of regional planning has so much appeal to many people, me included. I would also want to get around a table and deal fairly with all the issues facing us as neighbors and come to an amicable and democratic solution. The problems, however, would be as always, in the details and with us as people. We just do not always see eye to eye, do we? And then emotions tend to run higher when its neighbors and personal so trying to find a good compromise to make things work well, is hard. So, to be standing against this bill is not to be standing against my neighbors, it is just not that simple. My primary concern is for the consequences to the working waterfront businesses.

LD 1211 will focus on the relative role of statewide authorities versus regional authorities that do not currently exist in Maine. The establishment of regional management authorities will be a

dramatic departure from current law and will add significant layers to any permitting or leasing procedure.

In Maine we have a working waterfront to be proud of, something that our Congresswoman Chellie Pingree fought hard to protect, and filtering through the language in LD 1211 I see very little consideration for the working waterfront and no representation of aquaculture at all.

Given how detailed the rest of the language is I believe this was a deliberate choice. As the rate of climate change is forcing fishermen and farmers to adapt to new conditions at an unprecedented rate, we are facing pressure from those who are not experiencing these changes so acutely. They are campaigning against us when I wonder if they have been given accurate information or more like half-truths and spin from the campaign coordinators? Because climate change is happening fast, and this rate of change is driving much of the underlying trouble right now.

LD 1211 will detract DMR from doing the work they need to do, to help get all the work that was delayed by the pandemic caught back up. DMR was clearly supported by all the farmers who came and testified at the public hearing for LD 1146. There are so many stories of difficulty I am hearing from small farms right now, and all they need is for the DMR to have the funds and staff to do the work that they do well. LD 1211 will put a tremendous strain on the DMR staff time and Maines existing aquaculture leasing system will slow even further. We need to get back to work raising our products and getting them to market. It is so hard to get away from a

farm at this time of year and many of the farmers you saw last time are swamped with work, like all farmers are in spring.

If as the proponents say this bill came from a particular issue in Frenchman Bay, then I would ask that they look again at a different tool to address that problem.

Finally, I want to thank the committee for your patience and willingness to listen. Please vote Ought NOT to Pass on LD 1211. Thank you for your attention. I would be happy to answer any questions you have.

Respectfully,

Fiona de Koning