

Senator Miramant, Representative McCreight, Honorable members of the Joint Standing Committee on Marine Resources.

Thank you for providing the opportunity to testify on LD 1211. My name is Alex de Koning, I am a graduate of Mount Desert Island highschool, and the Umaine engineering department. My family has been farming mussels since 1776, I live and farm in Bar Harbor. Even though I have a funny accent, I did grow up here and am a proud US citizen.

I am testifying in strong opposition to LD1211, "A resolve to create the study group to research balancing development and conservation in Maine's coastal waters and submerged lands".

While conservation of our waters is something I am passionate about, and rely on for my livelihood, this study group is unlikely to add anything meaningful to the environmental conservation of our bays. What it is likely to do is to add a stage for those who want to prevent any activities they don't want to look at. Our current regulations, at least in aquaculture do an amazing job guaranteeing our environment is taken care of. That leaves the fact that a subset of people resent the fact their control stops at the boundary of their property, and beyond that they have no more power than any other citizen of the state of Maine, and I believe this bill will result in an attempt to change that, and is a backdoor way to achieve the same results of LD 1146 which you just defeated. You have just heard many of the proponents of this bill say that we need a bigger picture view, and any of these issues should not be decided by one town. I agree, but what they appear to be missing is the fact that the authority lies with the state, not local towns. Gouldsboro for example has very little power to stop the proposed salmon farm in Frenchman bay, but there are many avenues to prevent this bad proposal within the current regulatory framework.

This bill would again force DMR to dedicate significant time and resources to a study group, and those resources would further slow down our leasing process. It is currently projected to be 2-3 years from starting the formal leasing process to getting a lease decision. If the DMR is forced to man another study that will delay things even further. To put this into context a little, there are currently 44 lease applications being considered by the DMR. That's 44 people wanting to start a new business or expand their current operations. Currently what is holding them back from making that move is just waiting for their opportunity to present at a hearing.

We are in the process of starting a scallop farm, so let me illustrate the timing we are looking at.

We spent 6 months seriously looking for a site, the next 6 months were dedicated to writing and refining the lease application. Next is the wait for 2-3 years to get a lease decision, a wise person uses the LPA

system to learn how to farm the site in that wait time. If the lease gets granted, we will have to deploy longlines, and then wait till October to get the spat bags in the water. From there it will take three years to grow the product to market size before any income is realized. So if everything goes perfectly and I applied the day I graduated college at 22 years old, I will spend thousands of dollars, and countless hours every year, and hopefully start to get an income by the time I'm 28 or 29. Imagine what delaying this further would do for keeping young entrepreneurs in our state.

Thank you for your time and I am happy to answer any questions you have.

Alex de Koning.