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Northport
LD 586

The Legislature must recognize and deal with the risks associated with the allure of and the promises made by industrial-size fish farm (ISFF) proposals. This is why you should pass LD 586.

The poster child for the dangers inherent with ISFF proposals is Nordic Aquafarms, Inc. in Belfast.

Although overwhelming scientific evidence presented to the BEP and DEP, describing the economic, environmental and ecological damage Nordic would impose, it took a very expensive local citizen legal challenge of Nordic's lack of right, title and interest (RTI) all the way to the Maine Law Court to protect Belfast Bay and the Little River area.

You should be particularly aware of the following:

1. Nordic was not, as it claimed to be, a true Recirculating Aquafarm System (RAS), one that would reuse its water and properly dispose of its waste. Instead, it was a Flow Through System, consuming inordinate amounts of energy, millions of gallons of fresh water and disposing large quantities of pollutants directly into Belfast Bay, not to mention impairing State plans to limit carbon emissions.

2. Nordic was not a "good actor". It knew from the beginning it did not have RTI, but tried to bluff and bully its way to get what it wanted. It was more of an investment scheme than a serious proposal, never demonstrating that it had the funds necessary for the project.

3. It misled the State and its Agencies that in truth did not do their own due diligence. If the DEP and BEP had first insisted on proof of RTI, expensive time consuming taxpayer paid for hearings would never have been held and questionable permits been approved.

4. The "science" presented by Nordic was dubious and easily challenged. A case in point being its claim that its discharge waste would be just a "drop in the bucket" in Penobscot Bay. Well, maybe if one considered all of Penobscot Bay. The fact, however, is that Nordic wanted to discharge 7 million gallons a day in a shallow section of Belfast Bay near residential areas that had a water turnover time of 14 days. Thus, it would produce a constant plume of over 100,000 gallons of warm, nitrogen-rich water threatening the Bay's economically productive ecosystem.

I could add much more, but you should already be convinced, as am I, that you should support LD 586 to better protect Maine.