

Thank you to the members of the Committee on Marine Resources for the opportunity to testify on LD 586.

I'm John Church from Jonesport where I am the harbor master.

I am testifying in opposition to LD 586.

In my opinion, this bill is pushing the mandates of special interest groups who are attempting at every level to undermine the work of our local, state and federal regulatory agencies.

This bill wants to establish a "zero impact" standard that is virtually impossible to meet and to which no other industry is held accountable.

Any interaction with water, whether it be a company, an industry, or even human interaction, will leave some type of impact or "degradation" which is the term used by the Maine DEP.

As Harbor Master, I see impacts on our Chandler Bay by every industry and every person that touches the water.

If this bill passes, it will open the door for any disgruntled group or opposition to any industry to push the legislature to set new standards. Think of the fisheries or the leisure boating industry: They impact the water. Do we want some group upset with the working waterfront pushing legislation to set even more standards?

Let the regulatory agencies such as the DEP and DMR do their jobs.

The Maine Department of Environmental Protection and the Department of Marine Resources set very stringent standards for the land based aquaculture industry.

I know because I've watched Kingfish Maine work through the entire permitting process. It's a rigorous and thorough process. And it should be. If a company that meet the rigid standards set, they should be permitted. And Kingfish has all its local, state and federal permits.

Do we want wealthy special interest groups, who only want a pristine coast and no working waterfront, to dictate the regulations around any industry?

Please be thoughtful in your consideration of LD 586. There are many coastal communities which are welcoming of aquaculture projects. We want to work with DEP, DMR and our local planning boards to determine if a project is a right fit for us.

We do NOT want special interest groups undermining our local decisions and local control.