

To: Joint Committee on Marine Resources
From: Donald Eley
Re: LD 2065
Date: January 30, 2024

Dear Committee Members,

Thank you for allowing public comment regarding LD 2065, An Act to Amend Maine's Aquaculture Leasing Laws.

While aquaculture lease siting, monitoring and regulation enforcement are all within the purview of the Department of Marine Resource, public participation in the aquaculture lease granting process is an important part of ensuring Maine's marine resources are available and remain sustainable now and for future generations. Equally important is the role that public participation plays in any democratic process.

There are several instances, imbedded within LD 2065, that if passed will make it significantly more difficult for the public to participate in the aquaculture lease hearing process. Presently, if citizens of Maine want to publicly participate in the lease granting process, they can request a public hearing when five people petition the Commissioner of Marine Resources. However, the changes that are proposed by the DMR in LD 2065 dramatically increase that number to twenty-five. A five-fold increase!

I believe that any reasonable person will conclude that this change, from five to twenty-five, will make it significantly more difficult for the people of Maine to call for a public hearing regarding an aquaculture lease application. While this will certainly make it easier for the DMR Commissioner and his/her staff, it will clearly lock more people out of the public participation process.

I urge the Committee to reject these particular changes proposed in LD 2065 and to continue to allow five people to petition the Commissioner for a public hearing.

Reference LD 2065
Page 2, Line 19
Page 3, Line 27
Page 4, Line 19
Page 5, Line 4

Respectfully,

Donald Eley
Blue Hill, Maine
Board Chair, Friends of Blue Hill Bay

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BLUE HILL
LD 2065

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