

Kohl Kanwit

Maine Department of Marine Resources

21 statehouse Station

Augusta, Me

Ms. Kanwit,

As chair of the DMR Aquaculture Advisory Council and on behalf of its members, please consider this letter of support for the two LDs discussed at our last meeting with some key proposed language changes.

LD 2064 “An Act to Amend the Laws Regarding Certain Advisory Councils and Boards Related to the Department of Marine Resources”

As we discussed in the advisory council meeting we support the appointment of the chair of the Aquaculture Advisory Council as an Ex Officio non-voting member of the Marine Resources Advisory Council. We are however, concerned that the current version of LD 2064 strikes language specifically ensuring that there is representation on the Marine Resources Advisory Council for aquaculture as a voting member. We oppose the elimination of that language in the statute.

LD 2065 “An Act to Amend Maine’s Aquaculture Leasing Laws”.

As we discussed in the advisory Council meeting, we support the Department's continued efforts to make the States aquaculture leasing program efficient and fair. We strongly support the raising of the number of people required to request a hearing from 5 to 25. This change continues the public ability to have significant input if they are concerned about a proposed lease. We also support the Departments establishing a clear process for the conversion of a Limited Purpose Lease to a Standard Lease. We do however have one concern about language in section 12-D. D. that states “to evaluate the possible effects of the lease conversion on any new uses of the area. Our perspective is that if a Limited Purpose Lease has been in place for some time, has not had any violations or complaints, and its operator has complied with any conditions placed on the lease as part of the lease contract, the fact that a new use has emerged around the lease should not be a factor considered in the conversion of the preexisting Limited Purpose Lease to a Standard Lease. The existence of the Limited Purpose Lease prior to the new use should take precedence because it existed before the new use. We are not suggesting the new use should be prohibited, rather that its existence should not be taken into account during the conversion process.

Thank you for your continued hard work and willingness to listen to our perspective and concerns.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of the members of the Aquaculture Advisory Council.

Fiona de Koning. Chair.

