

Senator Reny, Representative Hepler, and esteemed members of the committee on Environment and Natural Resources.

My name is Alex de Koning, and I am part owner, and CEO of Hollander and deKoning Shellfish Farms in Bar Harbor Maine which employs 17 people year-round. I moved to the US at 14 years old from the Netherlands where my family has been farming mussels since the 1770's, I graduated from UMaine with an engineering degree and at age 21 I became a US citizen. I am happy to provide testimony to you today in support of LD2064.

By appointing the chair of the department's Aquaculture Advisory Committee to the Marine Resources Advisory Committee it increases the level of communication between the committees, and increases the opportunity for industry stakeholders to get information, or bring concerns to the DMR Advisory Committee.

I do however oppose the removal of the dedicated voting seat for a member of the aquaculture industry. While aquaculture is a working waterfront activity, it is sufficiently different from wild harvest fisheries that there should be a dedicated seat for the sector, to represent our unique industry.

Thank you for your time and service,

Alex