

Hello

I am writing to testify in opposition of LD 64 (An Act to eliminate the Cultchless American Oyster Growers License)

I have been growing oysters on the Damariscotta river for 26 years. I have become extremely familiar with all areas of the Damariscotta river (shores, surface, and bottom through scuba diving ). In becoming so familiar and spending time daily on the river I know there is a distinct difference between a cultchless oyster and a wild oyster. I do not see cultchless oysters on the shores of the Damariscotta river.

The second point I would like to make is in the past there have been problems on the Damariscotta river with poaching of oysters. Boats were actually coming out at odd hours and dragging near as well as on the leases. This will definitely increase if this rule goes into effect and dragging will be able to occur right up to the edge of bottom leases.

Lastly I feel that we (the aquaculture growers) have put a lot of effort into setting up protocols to protect the public health. I don't feel from experience with past poaching that these protocols would be followed.

I support Maine Aquaculture Association and feel they represent me and my farm and can find constructive solutions that address agency concerns as well as allow my business to grow.

Thank you, Eric Peters  
Norumbega Oyster