

Cameron Barner
Freeport
LD 1722

My Name is Cameron Barner, and I am Co-Owner and operator of Love Point Oysters in Freeport, Maine. I am writing in support of LD1722.

A primary hurdle faced by the aquaculture industry in Maine is the egregious timeline of the lease application process. This bill would help ease the backlog of applications by removing the need for a standard lease application in certain scenarios. Many applications in the leasing process are submitted by businesses who already operate experimental or standard leases and are applying to essentially convert or renew that lease into a new standard lease at the end of the previous lease term.

The issue here is that the lease application process in this scenario is just as lengthy and robust as if there was no existing lease already in place. It's a blatantly inefficient way to handle this process. If the lease was approved once, is operating without violating the terms of that lease, and is not looking to change the footprint or operations outlined in the original lease, there is simply no need for the extremely detailed, costly, and laborious standard leasing process. It is redundant and wasteful.

The passage of this bill would eliminate the need for the full application in this scenario, while still protecting the Commissioner of the DMR's authority to revoke aquaculture leases at any time for any reason. Reducing the backlog of lease applications and streamlining touch points between businesses and the Department of Marine Resources are of the utmost importance, and this bill outlines a simple and effective way to add efficiency. I strongly urge you to vote Ought to Pass on LD 1722. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,
Cameron Barner