

I'd like to express my support for LD 1596, "An Act to Support Maine's Sea Farmers." Pemaquid Oyster Company has been growing oysters in the Damariscotta River since 1986. We've seen many changes through those years in how the Department of Marine Resources regulates our industry. Some have made our work easier and some have had the opposite effect. LD 1596 aims to streamline some of the regulatory requirements without sacrificing the State's stewardship of the marine environment making our work as farmers easier to navigate as well as the DMR's responsibilities to process lease applications in a timely manner.

The backlog of lease applications and lease amendments is a burden on the industry and the DMR. LD 1596 addresses some of the issues in a way that doesn't sacrifice the public's participation in the process while allowing farmers to make minor changes in operations. As the oyster farming industry has evolved in the last forty years, gear types have changed, and LD 1596 allows farmers to innovate and try new gear types without undue regulatory requirements.

Thanks for your consideration.