

Colleen Brown
Whiting
LD 2025

Senator Tepler, Representative Hepler, and members of the Committee,
I am submitting testimony regarding LD 2025, “An Act to Create a Limited-purpose
License for Aquaculture Nursery and Husbandry Activities and to Clarify the
Aquaculture Lease Amendment Process.”

I approach this bill with caution.

I understand the intent to streamline certain aquaculture activities and to provide clarity around licensing and lease amendments. However, bills that create new license categories and alter amendment processes deserve careful scrutiny, particularly when they affect access to public waters and long-term use of shared marine resources.

My primary concern is that “limited-purpose” licenses and process clarifications, once established in statute, have a tendency to expand over time. What begins as a narrowly defined activity can evolve into broader commercial operations without the same level of review, public input, or cumulative impact analysis that full leases require.

Similarly, changes to the lease amendment process should not reduce transparency, local input, or meaningful oversight. Public waters are a shared resource, and adjustments to how leases are modified should not make it easier to bypass community concerns or environmental review.

I am not opposed to aquaculture, innovation, or responsible economic activity. But any expansion of licensing authority or streamlining of lease processes must include clear guardrails to ensure:

- limited-purpose licenses remain truly limited in scope,
- cumulative impacts are evaluated, not just individual applications,
- public access and traditional uses are protected, and
- local stakeholders retain meaningful opportunities for input.

Without strong safeguards, LD 2025 risks shifting long-term control of public waters incrementally, without sufficient legislative or public review.

For these reasons, I urge the Committee to proceed carefully with LD 2025 and to ensure that any changes maintain transparency, accountability, and protection of Maine’s shared marine resources.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully submitted,
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