

Good Morning Senator Miramant, Representative McCreight, Honorable Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Marine Resources. My name is Hannah Twombly and I live on North Haven. My partner, Connor O'Neil, and I jointly own and operate Maine Island Aquaculture, a small scallop farm looking to grow and diversify in the coming years. I am submitting this testimony to encourage you to vote "ought not to pass" to LD 1146.

This bill is concerning to us for several reasons: a) there is a lot lumped together and the objective does not feel transparent; b) it claims a desire to support the aquaculture industry while proposing many solutions that would directly harm it c) the application process and the criteria upon which applications are judged is rigorous as it is, and this bill indicates that DMR is not doing its due diligence, and d) the allocation of resources this bill proposes would be an ineffective use of time and money.

Connor and I appreciate and utilize the coast of Maine for a variety of reasons: recreation, commercial fishing, aquaculture, and of course for the sheer beauty of it. That's why we choose to live on an island. We understand that the ocean is a shared space, we see it in action every day. As scallop farmers, we also depend heavily on commercial fishing. Over 50% of our household income comes from lobstering and it's importance in our coastal communities cannot be overstated. We are pro aquaculture, pro commercial fishing, and pro tourism.

A year ago we attended the National Seaweed Symposium, and I sat in with the policy workgroup. In our work sessions, the Maine DMR and Maine's aquaculture permitting process came up in conversation many times as an efficient and effective model for other states to emulate. A representative from California knew almost as much about our permitting process as I did. I felt pride, as I often do, being from Maine. Utilizing DMR's valuable time and resources to review best practices in other states would be an ineffective use of energy.

This bill does not support small aquaculture farms nor large ones, thus it does not support aquaculture. Increasing the application fees and lease rents, limiting transferability, and increasing regulatory processes will all have negative impacts on small farms. The application process for a Standard Lease already takes 2-3 years, this bill would lengthen that timeframe. As scallop farmers, Connor and I can only have a viable business as a small farm by selling whole scallops rather than meats. Due to a recent change in legislation, we can't sell whole scallops on a Limited Purpose Aquaculture (LPA) license and thus cannot make a profit until we are approved for our standard lease. For farmers, the application process is expensive and it takes time. It's hard on us, but we understand the importance of regulation and a sound vetting process, and DMR does a great job with the resources it has. This bill does not support farmers, but rather it threatens to put both large and small scale farms out of business.

The climate is changing, and species are moving. We don't know what our fisheries will look like in 10 years, but our economy and our culture depend on a robust and diversified working waterfront. We need legislation that works to support our working waterfront.

Thank you for your time. I am happy to answer any questions you have.