Frenchman Bay United
frenchmanbayunited.org

An update on the opposition to American Aquafarms

June 30, 2021

DMR-required scoping session limited public access; comments due by July 7

Just like the “public informational meeting” in May that was required by the Maine DEP, the “scoping session” on June 23 for American Aquafarms’ draft lease applications to the Maine Department of Marine Resources (DMR) made a mockery of what was supposed to be a public meeting. Thanks to everyone who tried to participate.

Company officials and their consultants and attorneys spoke for an hour and forty minutes and then took questions from the public for two hours. Once again, the gallery function was turned off, so it was impossible to see how many people were attending or to view those called upon to ask questions despite several requests to DMR and the company to hold an open, transparent meeting. Acadia National Park officials, who had requested in advance an opportunity to speak at the meeting, were never called upon during the two hours of public comment.

Requests have been made to the Maine DMR to extend the comment period on the draft leases applications by 30 days and to force the company to hold another scoping session, this time in person now that COVID restrictions have been lifted. DMR has already rejected the idea of a second meeting.

In the meantime, as of now the comment period is slated to close on July 7, so please get your comments to DMR as soon as possible. Here is information with a link for electronic comments (strongly encouraged) and the mailing address:

https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=q6g_QX0gYkubzeoajy-GTo5baXlyS1BDhjTBf3wUT1UNUNROzNPTDRTOUjxMFk5MkVFSUNKUk84OS4u

To submit comments via mail (submissions need to be postmarked on or before July 7, 2021):
Maine Department of Marine Resources
Attn: Aquaculture Division
21 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333-0021
To view the applicants draft proposals, please visit: https://www.maine.gov/dmr/aquaculture/leases/draftstandardapps.html

And, in making your comments, please keep in mind the criteria that DMR uses to evaluate lease applications. They are woefully inadequate for a large-scale industrial aquaculture project like this, but until changes can be made in the future, please try to speak to these issues.

A standard aquaculture lease must not unreasonably interfere with:

• The ingress and egress of riparian owners;
• Navigation;
• Fishing or other uses of the area;
• Other aquaculture uses;
• The ability of the site and surrounding areas to support ecologically significant flora and fauna; or
• The public use or enjoyment within 1,000 feet of beaches, parks, or docks owned by local, state, or federal governments or certain government-owned conserved land.

In addition:

• The applicant must demonstrate that there is an available source of organisms to be cultured for the lease site.
• The lease must not result in unreasonable impact from noise or light at the boundaries of the lease site, and it must comply with DMR rules to minimize the visual impact of the lease.

Frenchman Bay United launched

Frenchman Bay United is a coalition of groups and individuals from around the bay and across the state who have come together to fight this irresponsible and destructive project that will destroy the bay we all love. Our website is now live at www.frenchmanbayunited.org, and we are in the process of creating an official 501c3 non-profit entity to help support the cost of legal assistance and expert witnesses.

Visit our website our often for the latest information and please continue to support our founding partners:

Friends of Frenchman Bay  http://friendsoffrenchmanbay.org
Friends of Eastern Bay  www.friendsofeasternbay.org
Friends of Schoodic Peninsula  www.facebook.com/salmonproposal/
Protect Maine’s Fishing Heritage Foundation  www.protectmaine.com

A list of our top reasons for opposing this project can be found here: https://www.frenchmanbayunited.org/stoppingtheproject
Bar Harbor lobstermen voice opposition; town council to seek intervenor status

All 26 lobstermen who fish out of Bar Harbor presented a statement of opposition to American Aquafarms at a recent town council meeting. In return, the council voted unanimously to seek intervenor status in the DMR lease application considerations. Efforts are underway to have lobstermen and women from the other harbors around the bay sign a similar statement. You can read more here: https://www.seafoodsource.com/news/aquaculture/bar-harbor-maine-seeks-intervenor-status-on-american-aquafarms-salmon-farm.

Ways you can help

With the permitting process underway, there are many ways to help:

- Make sure you participate in all upcoming “scoping sessions” and public hearings.
- Provide written comments on all applications once they are filed.
- Write your state legislators, Governor Mills, Maine’s Congressional delegation and local selectmen. Your voice matters!
- Write letters to the editor of local and statewide newspapers.
- Talk to friends and neighbors.
- Follow us on social media and share with your networks.
- Consider making a donation to support this effort.

As a reminder, here are some of the key reasons why this project is bad for Maine and our bay:

It will end the balance that has existed for generations among the many users of the bay: the dozens of people who fish for lobsters, scallops and mussels; clammers; mussel, oyster and kelp farmers; year-round and seasonal residents; tourists and tourism businesses; researchers and educators; and recreational boaters. That balance and the health of the bay is now threatened.

It will take prime fishing ground from lobstermen and impact other fisheries, like scallops, shrimp and mussels. Every day, three large ships and many small boats will cut through fishing gear and pollute some of the cleanest water in Maine, the class SA waters off Schoodic Point.

This industrial development has no place in the waters off Acadia National Park, a key driver of Maine’s tourism economy and a crown jewel of the national park system.

The company will be using experimental semi-closed pens that have never been used on a scale this large anywhere in the world. They could never build a project this large or pack fish so densely in pens in their home country of Norway. So, why here?

There will be water pollution from 4.1 billion gallons of untreated effluent produced daily by fish waste and feed, more than 2000 times the 2MGD [million gallons/day] treated effluent from the Bar Harbor’s waste treatment plant, and incredibly, more than three times the 1.3 billion gallons of treated discharge from the 14 sewage treatment plants that serve all of New York City.

There will be air and noise pollution from 40 diesel generators burning 3-4 million gallons of diesel fuel annually to power pumps and lights, plus light pollution at night from the 30 illuminated pens. A land-based incinerator will burn the sludge biproducts.

The likelihood of fish escapes, die-offs and disease that will impact other species and organisms.
Key agencies

Maine Department of Marine Resources
Patrick Keliher, Commissioner
21 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333-0021
www.maine.gov/dmr/aquaculture/index.html

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Jay L. Clement, Senior Project Manager
Maine Project Office
442 Civic Center Drive, Suite 350
Augusta Maine 04330
jay.l.clement@usace.army.mil

Maine Department of Environmental Protection
Melanie Loyzim, Commissioner
17 State House Station
28 Tyson Drive
Augusta, Maine 04333-0017
www.maine.gov/dep/contact/index.html

Governor and Congressional Delegation

Governor T. Janet Mills
1 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333
207-287-3531
www.maine.gov/governor/mills/contact

U.S Senator Susan Collins
202 Harlow Street, Room 20100
Bangor, ME 04401
Main: (207) 945-0417
www.collins.senate.gov/contact

U.S. Senator Angus King
202 Harlow St., Suite 20350
Bangor, ME 04401
Phone: (207) 945-8000
www.king.senate.gov/contact

6 State Street, Suite 101
Bangor, ME 04401
(207) 249-7400
https://golden.house.gov/contact

2 Portland Fish Pier, Suite 304
Portland, ME 04101
(207) 774-5019
pingree.house.gov/contact/

State Legislators who represent towns on the bay

Hancock County
State Sen. Louis Luchini
P. O. Box 1311
Ellsworth, ME 04605
(207) 664-4699
Louis.Luchini@legislature.maine.gov

Gouldsboro, Hancock, Sorrento,
Sullivan, Winter Harbor
State Rep. William “Billy Bob” Faulkingham
P. O. Box 121
Winter Harbor, ME 04693
Cell: (207) 460-6967
William.Faulkingham@legislature.maine.gov
Bar Harbor, Lamoine, Mt. Desert
State Rep. Lynne Williams
13 Albert Meadow
Bar Harbor, ME 04609
Cell: (207) 266-6327
Lynne.Williams@legislature.maine.gov

Trenton
Rep. Nicole Grohoski
P.O. Box 1732
Ellsworth, ME 04605
Cell: (207) 358-8333
Nicole.Grohoski@legislature.maine.gov

Town governments

http://www.barharbormaine.gov
https://www.gouldsborotown.com
http://www.hancockmaine.org
http://www.lamoine-me.gov
https://sullivanmaine.org
https://www.trentonme.com

News media

Bangor Daily News
https://bangordailynews.com/submit/

Portland Press Herald/Maine Sunday Telegram
https://www.pressherald.com/reader-services/letters-editor/

The Ellsworth American
news@ellsworthamerican.com
(350-word limit for letters)

Mount Desert Islander
news@mdislander.com
(350-word limit for letters; 500 for op-eds)