

Aquaculture Listening Sessions



Portland, Belfast, Newcastle, Machias, Ellsworth | All Welcome

About the Sessions

Guided by state law and for the benefit of all Maine people, the Maine Department of Marine Resources (DMR) administers the Aquaculture Leasing Program. This program was recently reorganized and now falls under the Bureau of Public Health and Aquaculture. In light of this change, as well as increased interest in the blue economy, aquaculture in general and growing demands on the program, DMR wants to hear directly from stakeholders as we plot a course for the future.

We are holding in-person listening sessions at five locations in coastal communities to hear from stakeholders. Each two-hour session is open to the public and will be professionally facilitated by Craig Freshley of Good Group Decisions in Brunswick. These are not traditional public hearings, but rather the sessions are designed to foster understanding of the opportunities and challenges we face and discussion of the best ideas for moving forward with aquaculture in Maine. In addition to giving input at the sessions, stakeholders are also invited to submit written feedback. A report of all input received, including themes and leading ideas, will be prepared and made available afterwards.

Meeting Details

- Portland, ME: Portland High School Auditorium, 284 Cumberland Ave., March 6th, 4-6pm
- Belfast, ME: Belfast Area High School Gym, 98 Waldo Ave., March 7th, 4-6pm
- Newcastle, ME: Lincoln Academy Cafeteria, 81 Academy Hill, March 13th, 4-6pm
- Machias, ME: UMaine Machias Science Building Room 102, 116 Obrien Ave., March 14th, 4-6pm
- Ellsworth, ME: Moore Community Center Theater, 133 State St., , March 21st, 4-6pm

Session Guidelines

- We're here to learn from each other about the opportunities and challenges we face and ideas for solutions.
- We're also here to get to know each other and build relations that will be helpful later.
- We're focused on HOW to administer aquaculture leasing in accordance with the state criteria, not WHAT the criteria should be. That input is best directed to legislators.
- All views are welcome and encouraged.
 - Spoken and written comments are encouraged at the sessions (it will be helpful, although not required, to bring a laptop to write comments on the spot), and written comments will be welcome after until March 28, 2024.
 - We want to give as many people as possible a chance to speak and will limit individual people from speaking too much.
 - We want people to speak freely. Recording is permitted although respect and discretion should be applied to how recordings are used.

- Discussion and order of speakers to be managed by the facilitator.
- Volunteer note taking is encouraged. Please bring a laptop if you might like to be a note-taker for table discussions.

Agenda

- 3:50 **Arrival**
- 4:00 **Opening**
Department of Marine Resources Bureau Director Kohl Kanwit will say a few words of welcome. Facilitator Craig Freshley will explain the session agenda and ground rules. We will quickly take stock of who's in the room.
- 4:05 **The Current Situation**
Kohl Kanwit will provide a brief overview of industry trends and expected future growth. She will also explain the basics of how aquaculture leasing currently works, with special attention to the State's eight criteria.
- 4:15 **Key Stakeholder Perspectives**
Before hearing from everyone, we will first hear from 4-5 stakeholder representatives of key sectors. Craig will facilitate a discussion among these key stakeholders to bring out their concerns, ideas, and what they want in common. We expect the lead-off stakeholders to be different for each session.
- 4:55 **Table Discussions**
Having heard from key stakeholders, what do YOU think? In a table discussion format, all participants will be encouraged to react to the ideas shared by the stakeholders and provide their own ideas.
- 5:15 **Full Group Comments**
We will hear some highlights from the table discussions, but we also want to hear from anyone who wants to share a comment with the whole group. This will be a continuing opportunity to share key perspectives and discuss the most promising ideas.
- 5:45 **Any Last Questions**
If anyone has any questions for DMR staff or for anyone in the room, this is the time to ask it.
- 5:55 **Closing Comments**
Each of the 4-5 key stakeholders will have a chance to make a brief closing comment. Bureau Director Kohl Kanwit will adjourn the session.
- 6:00 **Adjourn**