

January 10th, 2026

Chairman Robery Harb
NH House Resources, Recreation and Development Committee
GP Room 228
33 N. State Street
Concord, NH 03301

Re: HB 1477-FN relative to the permitting and regulation of anchored seasonal floating platforms on public waters.

Dear Chairman Harb and Honorable Committee Members:

I am writing on behalf of the New Hampshire Shellfish Farmers Initiative (NHSFI) to express opposition for HB1477 which **"..restricts anchored seasonal platforms on public waters to adjacent shorefront property owners, requires permits with identification and a \$50 fee, exempts certain government and conservation uses, and imposes fines for noncompliance."**

The NHSFI represents our state's passionate group of oyster farmers who have come together to raise awareness of and improve the infrastructure for New Hampshire grown shellfish, an environmentally sustainable industry. This is achieved through advocacy, education, research & development and restoration efforts.

Our oyster farms not only provide a local, sustainable source of food, they create jobs that benefit our local economy, and we work with environmental agencies to help restore the health of the bay for all. Most of our farms reside in the public waters of Little Bay. We work closely with many state agencies from the application process to locating our licensed sites to species permitting, importing, operating and managing boats, docks, and gear, harvesting, and selling food in our state.

We have concerns with this bill as it relates to PUBLIC waters and docks, both of which we use for our industry. This bill could impact our current operations. You will find highlighted concerns below.

NH Bill 1477-FN

This bill restricts **anchored seasonal platforms** on **public waters** to adjacent **shorefront property owners**, requires **permits with identification** and a \$50 fee, **exempts certain government and conservation uses**, and imposes fines for noncompliance.

- **anchored seasonal platforms:** There is no clear definition of 'anchored seasonal platform' in this bill. Are these platforms for recreational or commercial use? We found current NH rules for seasonal platform placements that seem to be sufficient (copied here) but are concerned there is no specification between personal and commercial use:

TITLE XXII NAVIGATION; HARBORS; COAST SURVEY CHAPTER 270

Section 270:72-d

270:72-d Anchored Seasonal Platform Location. –

I. No anchored seasonal platform shall be located:

- (a) In such a manner that it constitutes a hazard to the public safety because it interferes with or impedes, or could potentially interfere with or impede, navigation; or
- (b) In such proximity to moorings or to other anchored seasonal platforms as to constitute a hazard to public safety; or
- (c) In such a manner that it presents an unreasonable adverse effect on the environment, including but not limited to water quality, wildlife habitats, or natural areas; or
- (d) In such a manner that it unreasonably interferes with other recreational uses of the water and adjacent land.

II. The director shall develop rules for the purposes of this subdivision pursuant to RSA 541-A and RSA 270:72-g.

Source. 2021, 181:1, eff. Jan. 1, 2022.

We are also concerned with the following issues:

- **Public waters:** There is no clear definition of public waters in this bill. As we understand the current NH rules and regulations- many of which affect our businesses and aquaculture operations in tidal waters- NH has different rules and regulations for PUBLIC lakes, rivers and ponds and PUBLIC tidal waters. Each has a separate managing body - Pease Development Authority for moorings and tidal waters, and Marine Patrol for lakes, ponds and rivers. This bill makes no distinction between the two PUBLIC waters, and there needs to be clearer language. Because the bill is currently unclear we feel strongly that it should not be passed.
- **Shorefront property owners:** Public waters should not make exemptions for shorefront property owners. PUBLIC waters are for the enjoyment and care of every resident in the state of NH and should be shared, not restricted.

We hope this letter helps explain our concerns as to why NH Bill 1477-FN should not be passed in its current state. We make our living on NH waters, and take our roles as stewards of the bay very seriously.

Through an email exchange with Rep. John MacDonald, Vice Chairman, House Municipal & County Government Committee he stated, in reference to HB1477-FN:

"It will not apply to commercial operations on the coast."

Although this does allay some of our concerns, we feel it needs to be more clear in the language of the bill as to not affect future operations.

Thank you for your time, attention, and support.

Sincerely,



Laura Brown — Coordinator

NH Shellfish Farmers Initiative
nhshellfishfarmersinitiative@gmail.com
www.nhsfi.com

On behalf of:

Bayside Oysters
Dover Point Oyster Co.
Hen Island Oysters
Little Bay Beauties
Oysters
Swell Oyster Co.

Beam Oyster Co
Fat Dog Shellfish
Hidden Coast Shellfish
New England Superior Oysters
Virgin Oyster Co.

Choice Oysters
Fox Point Oysters
Joking Oyster
Rising Tide
Wagon Hill Oysters