

**Aquaculture Advisory Council
Meeting Agenda
September 9, 2025, from 9:00 AM - 12:00 PM
Augusta DMR Room 118 or [Microsoft Teams](#)**

Call to order – **Greg Lambert**

09:03-09:03

Roll call – **William Fearn**

09:03-09:04

✓	Greg Lambert - Chair	✓	Lauren Gray
✓	Will Owen – Vice Chair	X	Matt Moretti
✓	Jake Patryn	✓	Steve Zimmerman
✓	Christopher Davis		

Adoption of minutes from last meeting – **Greg Lambert**

09:04-09:15

[Steve Zimmerman](#) motioned. [Jake Patryn](#) seconded.
The minutes from the prior meeting were unanimously adopted.

Northeast Aquaculture Conference and Expo – **AqAC Discussion**

09:05-09:14

[Kohl Kanwit](#) began by introducing the NACE to the council, which will be held on January 7 – 9, 2026 in Portland, ME, and stated that DMR will have a presence at the conference this year. [Ms. Kanwit](#) presented to the council that it may be interested in providing an abstract to the conference as a way to introduce themselves and their work in Maine. [Ms. Kanwit](#) stated that abstracts are due October 1, 2025, and if the council was interested, DMR would facilitate their involvement.

[Mr. Greg Lambert](#) agreed that having an abstract or a session is a great idea and asked what the process would be like to get something introduced. [Dr. Anne Langston Noll](#) introduced the idea of an individual talk (15-minutes), or a panel session would be a good platform for the council and explained that a session is approximately 90-minute discussion and allows the presenter to introduce themselves and the projects that they are working on.

DMR stated that 1 or 2 council members would need to be there. [Mr. Zimmerman](#) and [Ms. Gray](#) volunteered to attend.

[Dr. Chris Davis](#) recommended a 90-minute session in partnership with DMR to discuss how the advisory council works in conjunction with the agency and industry on issues facing aquaculturists in Maine.

The council agreed that it's a good course of action and DMR will follow up with [Dr. Noll](#) and [Dr. Davis](#) regarding how to move forward.

Wet Storage and Re-submergence – **James Becker**

09:14-09:29

James Becker, Shellfish Dealer & Aquaculture Inspection Programs, presented on the differences between wet storage and re-submergence of shellstock in Maine waters. Mr. Becker explained that wet storage is a certified dealer only activity that can occur in coastal waters or land-based facilities (using recirculation or flow-thru methods) and is a temporary storage method for shellstock in approved or conditionally approved waters or through a controlled system using such waters. Wet storage is a post-harvest process and requires specific tagging. Mr. Becker then explained re-submergence can be conducted by aquaculture license and lease holders on their permitted sites and is considered a pre-harvest activity. Mr. Becker then explained the licensing requirements for both activities and the elements outlined in Chapter 115 (Vibrio) for wet storing or re-submerging shellstock product.

At the conclusion of the presentation, Mr. Steve Zimmerman asked about difference between wet storage and a land-based aquaculture. Mr. Becker stated that land-based aquaculture is conducted aquaculture (you are taking action to improve the product) and is not considered a dealer activity. Ms. Lauren Grey asked about the number of wet storage permits in the state. Mr. Becker replied that there are 55-60 (approximately) wet storage permits in the State of Maine. Dr. Davis asked what the processing time is for an application once it has been submitted. Mr. Becker stated that for wet storage DMR can generally process an application within a month, but other agencies involved in the process have their own processing times.

**Committee Updates – Steve Zimmerman, Lauren Gray, Chris Davis,
Kohl Kanwit, and Amanda Ellis**

09:29-10:23

Alternative Paths for Upwellers – Mr. Steve Zimmerman provided an update. The committee held several meetings since the committee was formed and learned that the desired upweller/nursery and husbandry activities could be done through a new license that would be renewed annually. The committee met several times with members of the industry to facilitate in the regulatory draft text that Dr. Amanda Ellis will discuss.

Dr. Amanda Ellis and Ms. Kanwit discussed the formation of the committees to discuss issues within the Aquaculture industry around the State of Maine, including identifying an alternative pathway for licensing upwellers. Dr. Ellis discussed the pathway forward for the statutory changes that would be required for some of the changes that are being proposed by the council. A legislative process would need to occur prior to the initiation of the rulemaking process.

Ms. Kanwit began the discussion of the Nursery/Husbandry proposal (Upweller Committee). Ms. Kanwit outlined the differences between nursery activities (rearing operations for marine organisms in early life stages) and husbandry activities (product maintenance operations like tumbling and sorting). Ms. Kanwit stated that through the committee, it identified the issues associated with permitting Nursery/Husbandry practices through the LPA license and proposed a solution that would hopefully address some of the issues highlighted. The proposed solution would result in the creation of a new license for nursery and husbandry activities that could be issued to “a person” (which includes companies), is not subject to the owner/operator requirement like an LPA is and is the size of 4 continuous LPAs (1600 sq feet). Dr. Davis asked if a density standard will be implemented for the proposed license, like LPAs. Ms. Kanwit stated that if the draft language is to move forward in the statute process, then the details, including a density standard, would be addressed in rule.

Dr. Davis made a motion to advance the draft language related to the nursery/husbandry proposal. Mr. Steve Zimmerman seconded that motion. The motion moved forward unanimously.

Lease Amendments – Ms. Gray provided an update. The committee met several times since the last advisory meeting reviewing the draft proposal presented by DMR to improve the lease amendment process. Ms. Gray stated that at the last meeting, the language was reviewed by the committee during meetings in July and August. After the August meeting, additional language was proposed by DMR concerning waiting periods.

Dr. Ellis opened the discussion by distinguishing between the work of the Nursery/Husbandry Committee, which is developing a new licensing pathway, and the Lease Amendment Committee, which is focused on modifying an existing system. Dr. Ellis then reviewed the current legal and regulatory framework for processing amendment requests. The review included challenges with the existing system as identified by DMR and the committee and how the statutory change would address them.

Additionally, Dr. Ellis introduced additional language that was suggested by DMR staff shortly before the committee finished its initial work.

The additional language would establish a one-year waiting period for lease amendment applications in two circumstances:

1. Sites that were approved for bottom culture only, but the lease holder applies to add floating gear.
2. Sites that were approved without equipment or structures, but the lease holder applies to add equipment or structure.

Dr. Davis asked about the rationale for the waiting period. Dr. Ellis stated that the intent is to encourage a lease applicant to be transparent about what they are proposing when their application is initially filed and processed. Dr. Ellis gave the example of someone who applied for bottom culture only and people participated in the hearing and did not have any concerns because no gear would be floating at the surface. The applicant is granted their lease and then immediately files an amendment application for floating gear. That could lead to a lot of frustration for stakeholders, and it circumvents the purpose of a public hearing.

Fiona de Koning asked if DMR modified what an applicant proposed would the modification be subject to a one year waiting period. Dr. Ellis thought it might depend on the case specific scenario, but generally modifications are imposed to address interference with one or more decision criteria and are typically conditions, which could have implications for amendments since an amendment cannot violate lease conditions.

Dr. Davis further inquired whether an amendment would be required for changes to floating gear type or floating rope. Dr. Ellis and Ms. Kanwit clarified that DMR has not required amendments for changes to floating rope or its characteristics and that, under the proposed statutory change, lease holders may change between floating gear types provided floating gear has already been authorized.

Ms. Gray stated that there might be concerns about a waiting period limiting someone's ability to make changes. Ms. Kanwit clarified that the proposed waiting period would only apply to the specific scenarios outlined above and they are limited to a year. Ms. Gray thought waiting periods for those specific scenarios would be reasonable.

Mr. Lambert made a motion to advance the draft language related to lease amendments, emphasizing the addition of the 1-year waiting period language. Mr. Will Owen made a motion to move forward with the draft as proposed. Dr. Davis seconded the motion. The draft was unanimously moved forward.

Lease Process Improvements – Dr. Davis stated that there is no update as this time.

Work plan - **Greg Lambert**

10:23-10:50

1. Alternative Paths for Upwellers – existing committee - Completed
2. Lease Process Improvements - existing committee - Completed
3. Lease Amendments – existing committee
4. Review of the Bonding system (C. Davis)
5. LPA Combination Proposal (M. Moretti)
6. Lease marking requirements (K. Kanwit)
7. Biotoxin Workshop (M. Moretti)

Mr. Lambert proposed item 4 and item 7 as the next items for the committee to address. The discussion was opened to the council and Mr. Zimmerman proposed beginning on item 6, to enhance marking requirements for first responders navigating through lease sites, due to an incident on the Damariscotta. Ms. Kanwit stated that item 6 encompasses a larger issue with the marking requirements that need to be discussed between DMR and the council as there are multi-agency components that need to be discussed in greater detail. Mr. Lambert asked the council regarding information on what items should be next for the council and Will Owen proposed keeping item 4, item 6, and item 7 on the council's radar, as item 6 is a complex issue that could require more additional time. The final consensus among the council was to move forward with items 4 and item 7, with the request that if DMR does review marking requirements, bring a list of recommendations for the council as a starting point.

Mr. Lambert requested a motion be made for item 4 and item 7 to be the next two items for the council to adopt and create committees. Mr. Owen made a motion to move item 4 and item 7 up the list. The motion was unanimously accepted by the committee. Dr. Davis volunteered to be the chair of the committee for the bonding system, and Mr. Jake Patryn volunteered to become the chair for lease amendments committee to replace Dr. Davis. Ms. Gray volunteered to be the co-chair for the biotoxin committee. Ms. Kanwit stated that DMR staff would be allocated to committees based on degree of relevance.

Break

10:50-10:55

Aquaculture Division Updates – **Amanda Ellis**

10:55-11:04

Under L.D. 1722, An Act to Amend the Laws Governing the Regulation of Aquaculture Leases, which was signed into law on June 20, 2025, late fees are now assessed for certain applications. In accordance with the new law if a renewal or conversion application is received after the expiration of a lease but within 30 days of the date of expiration, the application must include a non-refundable \$500 late fee. If no application is received within 30 days of the expiration date, the site is terminated.

The late fee may be waived if a substantial illness or medical condition prevented the leaseholder from submitting the application prior to the date of expiration. Requests for a medical waiver must include documentation from a physician describing the substantial illness or medical condition.

Dr. Ellis explained that DMR sends courtesy reminders, via email, to lease holders at 120 and 60 days from the lease expiration date. The courtesy reminders are automated and include the date the lease expires and required next steps. Although DMR sends courtesy reminders, it is the responsibility of each lease holder to submit applications in a timely manner to avoid late fees or the termination of a lease site.

Dr. Ellis reminded the industry that the deadline to pay annual lease rent deadline is approaching and failure to pay rent on time is treated as a compliance issue. Additionally, Dr. Ellis informed the council that the LPA renewal period will begin on October 1st and messaging to industry will be sent out soon.

Dr. Ellis also provided a staffing update that the hearings officer hired in June has left DMR. .

Industry input - **Greg Lambert**

11:04-11:05

Mr. Lambert stated that no industry input was brought to the council's attention since the last meeting. No other council members had anything brought to their attention.

Public input - **Greg Lambert**

11:05-11:06

Mr. Lambert asked if there was any public input from members of the public. Eric Oransky provided public comment regarding the cost to industry members surrounding the potential rule change of marking requirements.

Schedule next meeting - **Greg Lambert**

11:06-11:11

January 21, 2026 @ 9:00am – 12:00pm

Adjourn

11:11

Steve Zimmerman-motion. Will Owen-second