

A 40-acre [oyster farm](#) proposed in Maquoit Bay in Brunswick by Mere Point Oyster Co. is a flashpoint in the debate.

“I ask the DMR to listen carefully to the generations of men and women who have made the lobster industry what it is today and protect our livelihood from what has become nothing more than a land grab in upper Casco Bay,” Powers said.

A petition with 189 signatures that asks for changes to the aquaculture lease review process was delivered to the Maine Department of Marine Resources on Wednesday. Petitioners want an immediate, statewide moratorium on pending lease applications bigger than 10 acres.

They also want the state to add rules that would allow it to consider whether a nearby location or different lease boundaries would better balance competing water uses.

The group wants its rules to be retroactive to the pending Mere Point Oyster Co. lease application.

A citizens’ petition needs at least 150 signatures to trigger a department rule-making process.

The department’s present aquaculture evaluation process includes making sure a new lease will not unreasonably interfere with navigation, waterfront access, fishing or other uses of the area, result in unreasonable noise or interfere with wildlife and marine habitat.