

To All Parties at the DEP and BEP,

Hello, my name is Dylan Connor. I am a lobster fisherman who fishes in the bay, more specifically, in the proposed area of the new salmon factory that NordicFarms wishes to build on. I've been fishing with a apprentice license since the age of ten and have had my own full-time commercial license for the past two years. This puts me at the ripe old age of 25, allowing me to give you a more unique perspective as one of the next generation of fisherman in the area

As I'm sure you've encountered from others, the fishermen are very concerned with the location, construction, and future influence that the run-off from the pipeline could have on local fisheries. I attended the hearing on the 12th of February and learned three important things. The first is that I am not educated enough to understand most-if-not-all of the legal side of the factory and adjacent pipeline. The second is that I am educated enough to recognize this, and instead would like to give you my perspective on what it could mean, should you allow this to go through as is. The third, is that you have the patience of a saint to be able to put up with lawyers bickering with each other all the time.

I believe that most of the concerns come from the actual construction of the pipeline, and the following years of warm fresh water being poured into our fishing grounds. To start with, we'll have to go back in time a bit. We fish in an area called Zone D. When you obtain a license you are limited to fishing most of your gear in that area. There are a few legal loopholes to this, but as a general rule of thumb, you are only allowed to fish in a certain area after obtaining your license. A few years ago a large portion of Zone C-D was closed. The affected areas were from Orrington to Stockton to Castine. The area in Zone C-D was shut off because of a high mercury content. The mercury was caused by a run-off by a plant in orrington. (Citation 1 Below). This caused a whole new wave of Fishermen to move into our Zone D territory. Have you ever seen a group of people whose entire livelihood depends on territory all shoved into a smaller space? Fishermen can be fairly territorial. Okay, they can be REALLY territorial. It makes sense when how much money you make is directly tied to how many people are crowding the areas you fish in. This was a pretty recent blow to fisherman, but even more recent was the dredging project planned for the Searsport area. Thankfully for us, it was canceled because they were afraid that dredging up all that sediment would bring all of the mercury into the areas where Fisherman earn their paycheck. (Citation 2 below) This area, that has the potential for high mercury, is directly upstream from the proposed site for the Nordic pipeline.

So why am I bringing this short history lesson up? Lobsters are extremely fragile. I don't mean the shell itself, (trust me I've had more than one finger get stuck in a claw) I mean they only thrive under very specific conditions. Water too warm? No lobsters. Water lacking salinity? No lobsters. Too many invasive species circa Sea Squirts? No lobsters (Citation 3 below). There

are not many places in the world where you can catch a North Atlantic Lobster, thus the name. But every year the ocean warms up a little bit. And every year the lobsters have been moving up north a little more. As it stands right now I hear more and more about the states to the south of us and how their industries are dying. Coincidentally I hear more and more about how the Canadians are having some of the best years ever. We are right in the middle, where some years look good, and others don't. But that's where the first major issue rears itself. The proposed pipeline would be dumping fresh water that is a warmer temperature than ambient ocean temps for the bay. Remember what I said earlier about how picky lobsters are? I swear to you, it doesn't take much for them to leave. They don't have predetermined migratory patterns. They don't have families waiting for them in the Belfast bay area. If the water here changes, they will leave. Maybe not right off, but given enough change from the constant dumping of fresh, warm water they won't stick around.

Now let's go back to the territorial nature of Fisherman. If the lobsters leave, you might ask yourself "why not just follow them?". On paper, sure we could follow them out of the proposed pipeline site to wherever they make a new home. History has a habit of pushing the smaller businesses and environment to the side in favor of those with money and power. How many times have you seen the same thing happen over and over? Every Fisherman has their own spot that they claim as theirs. My grandfather has been fishing this same area since the main form of entertainment in a house was listening to the radio (if you were lucky). Our best fishing spot just happens to be right on top of the proposed pipeline area. Lucky us right? We can't just move our entire livelihood to a new location. Our buoy colors are bright and vibrant so we can find them. If we moved to a new area with already established Fisherman, it would be like putting targets on our buoys that say "please cut this gear". We are pretty well stuck in the fishing areas that we have already claimed over the years. And those areas directly conflict with the areas that are going to be affected by this pipeline.

So let's just pretend for a moment that this does go through. The proposed time frame for the building period of the pipeline started in November. At the meeting I heard someone mention that there were no lobsters in the area during that time of year. This WOULD be true as of ten years ago maybe. But in actuality the fishing season here starts later and ends later every year. With the ocean warming up, the lobsters are not showing up until later and later into fall. The prime fishing windows are being pushed later and later every year. Last year the boat didn't come home until almost Christmas. I don't know where the information came from that led to the statement that they aren't around in November. But it wasn't based on the experience of the people who are actually out on the water fishing.

Next let's pretend that the dredging needed to build a pipeline during a fishing season doesn't completely screw up our fishing for that year, and years to follow. Now you have the

runoff of fresh water messing with both the salinity, and temperature of the water. Okay fine, maybe the lobsters can ignore that. After all the area and treeline are scenic and maybe they like the view. I know I do. The next issue we run into is time. Like I said, maybe all of the issues us fisherman are worried about might not happen right off. History says otherwise but for argument's sake maybe it will be fine. But what about five years down the line, or ten years down the line? The reason the area upstream from us was closed was because the plant in Orrington closed down. Therefore it wasn't being upkept anymore which led to all the pollution moving down the river, into where we fish. I know this is making issues out of something that hasn't happened yet. But by putting this building and pipeline right into our fishing ground. You are asking every single fisherman that fishes there to put absolute trust in this company. People don't like having things put out of their control. Fishermen are no different, most fishermen became fishermen because they love making money without relying on others. We are our own businesses. But lately it feels like less and less of that holds any light to anything. We are constantly at the mercy of things out of our control. Between the dealers dictating our prices, constant struggles for an ever weakening area to fish, and larger businesses coming in and ruining the fishing areas for us, it gets harder and harder to make this profession work.

Getting a lobster license is a HUGE accomplishment, at least that's what it felt like to me when I did. But every year it feels like some new regulation, or some new business in the area is going to make it impossible to keep going. I already have to jump through so many hoops just to make a paycheck. Try to understand why Lobsterfishermen do not want this Salmon factory where it is. I've already heard talks that if the pipeline is built, and it does what we all assume it's going to do, and ruins the fishing area. There will be legal action involved. That's not something I want at all, I just want to be able to fish in the areas I have my entire life and not have to worry that something completely out of my control ruined it for all the local Fisherman.

Well anyway, I hope this letter has at least given you something to think about, and a different perspective on what the real world effects could be, given that everything goes through as it is right now. I know I'm offering little in the way of solutions to this problem. I'm not an expert on things outside of fishing. But I really hope that more testing can be done on what the effects of this pipeline will amount to in the long term. Maybe an independent testing company with no stake in this? Maybe moving to a less risky location? I'm not sure, but if you have any questions about any of this you can reach me at any of my contact information below. Thank you for your time, and have a nice day.

1. <https://bangordailynews.com/2014/05/16/environment/state-permanently-closes-lower-penobscot-river-to-lobster-fishing/>
2. <https://bangordailynews.com/2015/09/09/news/midcoast/application-for-controversial-searsport-harbor-dredging-project-withdrawn/>
3. <https://mlcalliance.org/2018/02/10/a-sea-squirt-invasion-hits-maine/>

Dylan Connor - (207-356-1214) - dylweed014@gmail.com