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GOVERNOR

STATE OF MAINE
DEPARTMENT OF MARINE RESOURCES
21 STATE HOUSE STATION
AUGUSTA, MAINE
04333-0021

PATRICK C. KELIHER
COMMISSIONER

Erik Heim
Nordic Aquafarms, Inc.
500 Congress Street
Suite 500
Portland, ME 04101

April 4, 2019

Dear Mr. Heim,

I write in response to your letter dated March 20, 2019 requesting an update on the Department's intentions and process for approval of salmon heads, racks and other byproducts for lobster bait.

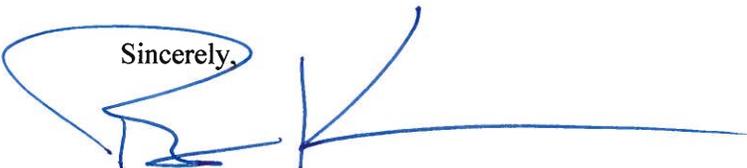
As your letter acknowledged, DMR Regulations Chapter 24.23 prohibit the introduction of any dead salmonid fish species or salmon remains, parts or viscera to coastal waters of Maine, and a regulatory change would be required to remove this prohibition or create an exemption.

The lobster fishery is facing a significant bait shortage this season, and potentially for future years. Given this reality, I am interested in exploring all options for the safe introduction of alternative bait sources, and intend to open Chapter 24 to make the necessary regulatory change referenced above.

In addition to resolving the Chapter 24 prohibition, the biosecurity practices at the aquaculture facilities from which salmonid waste would be sourced will need to be evaluated and a risk assessment to wild and farmed marine resources conducted. Product proposed to come from these facilities will need to go through the bait review process as outlined in DMR Regulations Chapter 25.11.

The Department appreciates that you are seeking to inform your final facility design phases. While I am unable to commit to a specific timeline for rulemaking this year, please be assured that my staff will work collaboratively with you to review plans in anticipation that these changes will be pursued in the near future.

Sincerely,



Patrick C. Keliher
Commissioner