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Aquaculture Permitting in Southeast Massachusetts: A Qualitative Study

This presentation will review the history of US seafood demand and how the US government is encouraging domestic marine aquaculture, among other actions, to meet future projected demand through policies and initiatives. The permitting process for obtaining aquaculture sites however, has been cited as a significant barrier to industry participants. A few towns in Southeast Massachusetts have employed a permitting process for oysters, clams and mussels called an Aquaculture Development Area (ADA) which allows a town to obtain permits for a site, and for growers to subsequently apply for parcels within the ADA. ADAs hold promise to address the permitting barrier as its permitting process is spreading to other parts of the country. A plan for a qualitative study of the Massachusetts stakeholders using semi-structured interviews will be presented in order to better understand the views regarding ADAs as well as the more standard approach to permitting- one applicant seeking to permit one site.