



# HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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January 22, 2014

Testimony of Representative Sara Gideon  
In support of LD 1452, An Act to Allow Municipalities with Shellfish Conservation Ordinances to  
Request to Prohibit Marine Worm Harvesting  
Before the Joint Standing Committee on Marine Resources

Senator Johnson, Representative Kumiega, honorable members of the Marine Resources Committee, I am Sara Gideon, representing Freeport and part of Pownal and I am here today in support of LD 1452.

Thank you for considering this bill and for the important work you do in protecting our marine resources. As you, and many of us in this room are aware, our clam populations are in decline, facing constant threats not only from invasive species such as green crabs, but also from ocean acidification and from human practices that affect their population. This includes the way we fish and recreate on our tidal resources and the way we use and inhabit our land near those tidal resources.

This goal of this bill is to conserve and protect identified tidal flats so that they may become abundant fertile ground again. How does this bill do that?

1. It gives municipalities the opportunity to identify vulnerable areas and to then petition the state for a prohibition on both clam harvesting and marine worm harvesting. The petition process is quite detailed and does not allow for more than 10% of a municipalities total intertidal acreage to be protected at a time.
2. It requires that any proposed closed area has a management plan which will protect said area from predators during its closure, ensuring that the goal of conservation and protection is achieved.
3. It establishes a civil penalty for violation of these rules.

Most of you live in coastal communities yourselves. I do too and like you, most days I see and talk to the men who make their day's wages from the hard work of harvesting clams. In Freeport, they are on the Harrasseket River in the earliest hours of morning and on the coldest days of winter. They are putting in far longer hours than a simple day of low tide work. They are out there physically emptying the green crab traps, putting up netting, and leading the state in an attempt to beat back the extinction of clams. They are searching for breaks in the ice during our days of extreme cold so that they can feed their families. The bill before you today is just one tool we can wield to keep our clam flats fertile. I thank you for your consideration today.