



Town of Brunswick, Maine

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Testimony in support of LD 1452
“An Act To Allow Municipalities with Shellfish Conservation Ordinances To Request Permission
To Prohibit Marine Worm Harvesting”
January 22, 2014

Dear Senator Johnson, Representative Kumiega, distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Marine Resources,

My name is Daniel Devereaux, and I'm the Marine Resources Officer and Harbormaster for the Town of Brunswick Police Department, which has oversight of the Brunswick Municipal Shellfish Program. I have been working in this capacity for the last 17 years. Prior to working in Brunswick I worked in similar capacity with the Town of Harpswell.

I'm speaking today to encourage your support of the concepts of LD 1452 “An Act to Allow Municipalities with Shellfish Conservation Ordinances to Request Permission to Prohibit Marine Worm Harvesting”, a bill which really deserves a different title.

LD 1452 will be played out today as one industry (clamming) trying to gain exclusive fishing rights over another industry (worming), when in reality there is no preference to one industry over the other in the amendments I hope that you may consider. As you will see, both clamming and worming would be excluded from certain small protected areas along a municipality's coast, which it has defined as being severely impacted by the green crab infestation and suffering other consequences of global climate shifts. Within the attached amendments submitted to me by Brunswick Marine Resources Council on January 16, you will see that municipalities with strategies to address these concerns, would submit those plans to the Department of Marine Resources for review and if enough evidence is supported, be allowed to protect a small area from the two types of hand harvesting that occur in the intertidal zone. This gives those municipalities, who choose to participate, an opportunity to work toward stabilizing, protecting, and restoring these high value habitats, all the while working toward restoring shellfish and worm populations (crabs don't discriminate they eat worms too). The Department of Marine Resources would maintain oversight authority and would be able to decide whether or not a municipality meets the criteria to exclude these types of harvesting activities, and whether or not valid strategies will be deployed. LD1452 will be one tool that could help municipalities mitigate the damage that's been caused. Allowing the municipality the option to exercise authority over a small protected portion of their intertidal to prohibit all hand harvesting activities would make restoration possible. Without such controls in place to prohibit handling of the conflicting fisheries, restoration activities will be severely impeded and possibly futile.