

STATE OF MAINE

—
**IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD
TWO THOUSAND AND THIRTEEN**
—

**JOINT RESOLUTION RECOGNIZING OCEAN ACIDIFICATION
AS A THREAT TO MAINE'S COASTAL ECONOMY,
COMMUNITIES AND WAY OF LIFE**

WHEREAS, the ocean environment and its resources are vital to the economy, cultural identity and daily lives of many Maine citizens and communities; and

WHEREAS, coastal residents and communities in Maine depend on healthy and abundant ocean resources for their livelihoods, recreation and ways of life; and

WHEREAS, over 10% of jobs in Maine are in ocean-related industries, including live marine resources, marine construction, tourism, recreation, offshore minerals, ship building and marine transportation, resulting in 60,000 jobs and \$3,000,000,000 in gross domestic product in 2009; and

WHEREAS, in 2012, live landings and harvestings of Maine soft-shell clams, mahogany quahogs, blue mussels and lobsters totaled more than 154,000,000 pounds with a market value of nearly \$356,000,000, and the lobster catch alone accounted for almost 126,000,000 pounds of landings, with a value to the lobstermen of more than \$338,000,000; and

WHEREAS, much of Maine's economy is based on tourists that come to see our picturesque coast, harbors and working waterfront communities; and

WHEREAS, the world's oceans have absorbed more than a quarter of the carbon dioxide released into the atmosphere since the start of the Industrial Revolution, causing changes in ocean chemistry known as ocean acidification; and

WHEREAS, ocean acidification is caused primarily by increased atmospheric concentrations of carbon dioxide, and acidification of coastal waters is exacerbated by runoff, pollution and some natural processes; and

WHEREAS, shell-forming marine organisms with calcium carbonate exoskeletons, such as shellfish, lobsters, crabs and plankton, which are the base of the food chain in the Gulf of Maine, are particularly susceptible to the change in the chemical composition of the ocean; and

WHEREAS, 90% of the value of Maine's fisheries comes from shell-producing species such as lobster, which made up 77% of the total value of all Maine landings in 2012; and

WHEREAS, the species that support much of Maine's coastal economy are at risk to changes in the chemical composition of the Gulf of Maine, and these impacts include weakened shells, reduced growth and reproductive success, lowered resistance to disease, increased susceptibility to predation and other changes to biological and physiological processes; and

WHEREAS, ocean acidification has already had significant economic impacts in other parts of the United States, including along the coast of the state of Washington, where acidification

killed billions of oyster larvae and nearly destroyed the region's oyster hatcheries, bringing significant economic harm to that state's shellfish industry, which supports 3,200 jobs and generates \$270,000,000 annually; and

WHEREAS, the Gulf of Maine has been identified as the most susceptible region on the Eastern Seaboard to ocean acidification, potentially due to the colder and fresher water coming in from the Labrador current, the large proportion of riverine freshwater input and the gulf's semi-enclosed shape; and

WHEREAS, ocean acidification, as one of multiple drivers of environmental change in the Gulf of Maine, has the potential to threaten livelihoods and activities that have been at the core of Maine's coastal communities for hundreds of years; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED: That We, the Members of the One Hundred and Twenty-sixth Legislature now assembled in the First Regular Session, on behalf of the people we represent, take this opportunity to recognize that ocean acidification, as one of multiple consequences of environmental change in the Gulf of Maine, presents a threat to Maine's coastal economy, communities and way of life; and be it further

RESOLVED: That We support research and monitoring in order to better understand ocean acidification in the Gulf of Maine and Maine's coastal waters, to anticipate its potential impacts on Maine's residents, businesses, communities and marine environment and to develop ways of mitigating and adapting to ocean acidification; and be it further

RESOLVED: That the federal agencies conducting research into ocean acidification or mitigation of these impacts to our coast should prioritize research on those species such as lobster that will further our understanding of how our changing oceans will affect key species that support significant portions of our State's economy; and be it further

RESOLVED: That suitable copies of this resolution, duly authenticated by the Secretary of State, be transmitted to the United States Secretary of Commerce; the United States Secretary of Agriculture; the Administrator of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration within the Department of Commerce; the Director of the National Science Foundation; the chair of the White House Council on Environmental Quality; the chair of the federal Interagency Working Group on Ocean Acidification; and the Maine Congressional Delegation.