

## HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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## "Resolve, Directing the Department of Marine Resources To Conduct an Impact Study in the St. George River Estuary"

Senator Baker, Representative Kumiega, and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Marine Resources, I am Chuck Kruger of Thomaston, serving the fine people of Maine House District 92 which also includes St. George, Cushing, South Thomaston, Matinicus Plantation and the Unorganized Territory of Criehaven.

I am here today to present LD #178, "Resolve, Directing the Department of Marine Resources To Conduct an Impact Study in the St. George River Estuary."

I sponsor this legislation at the request of the Georges River Regional Shellfish Management Organization, which is comprised of five towns on the St. George River charged with administering the local shellfish ordinance and management plan. These are hardworking and dedicated town officials who are working with fishermen to make our resource as productive as it can be while assuring a positive future for all the fisheries.

First, I must uphold a silly tradition and pass out goodies to the Committee. I served proudly on this Committee in the 124<sup>th</sup>, 125<sup>th</sup>, and 126<sup>th</sup> Maine Legislatures and I really enjoyed the experience. I hope you enjoy these little shellfish-shaped chocolates.

Secondly I would like to propose an amendment to this Resolve. I propose to delete the second sentence of Sec. 1, beginning with "The Department must investigate..." and ending with "...marine worms has on nearby seed clams." We believe this change improves the ability of the Department of Marine Resources to conduct a more useful study.

I believe the benefits of this study will extend beyond my district to all areas of the coast. Further, the benefits will extend far beyond the fishing families directly involved. As we know, the shellfish industry is a major economic driver from Kittery to Calais, and we owe it to the people of Maine, for whom we work, to make it as good as it can possibly be.

Thank you.

District 92

Sec. 1. Department of Marine Resources to conduct an impact study in the St. George River estuary on the effect of harvesting marine worms and softshell clams in the same area. Resolved: That the Department of Marine Resources shall conduct an impact study in the intertidal area of the St. George River estuary on the effects of harvesting marine worms and softshell clams in the same area. The department must investigate the effects harvesting marine worms has on softshell clams in areas where softshell clams are harvested, in particular the effects harvesting marine worms has on nearby seed clams. The department shall collaborate with the Georges River Regional Shellfish Management Committee and the member towns of St. George, Thomaston, South Thomaston, Cushing and Warren in determining the intertidal area to be studied and the practices being used in harvesting both marine worms and softshell clams and developing best management practices for harvesting marine worms and softshell clams in the same area; and be it further

Sec. 2. Report. Resolved: That the Department of Marine Resources shall submit a report on the study under section 1 and any recommended legislation to the Joint Standing Committee on Marine Resources by January 4, 2016. The Joint Standing Committee on Marine Resources may report out a bill based upon the report to the Second Regular Session of the 127th Legislature.

19 SUMMARY

This resolve directs the Department of Marine Resources to conduct an impact study in the intertidal area of the St. George River estuary in collaboration with the Georges River Regional Shellfish Management Committee and the member towns on the effects of harvesting marine worms and softshell clams in the same intertidal area in order to develop the best management practices in harvesting both species in the same area. The resolve directs the department to report its findings and any recommended legislation to the Joint Standing Committee on Marine Resources.