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443 2104 Testimony for L. D. 178 February 25 2015.

Throughout the 30 + years that I have been a harvester of both marine worms and shellfish, I have personally found areas abundant with worms in large areas - 1200 to 1600 per tide. On more than a few occasions, because of the time of year and or quality, I have left the area alone to allow worms to mature to a marketable size. I have returned later during the year, only to find that local shellfish harvesters had turned the entire area. When this happens the productivity of the worm resource is reduced by about 75%. Not once did I ever blame other harvesters for this. I simply walked away to find more productive worming while waiting for the area to settle. Picking or pulling clams also has this same effect on an area. Hand driven holes are left in the mud at very close intervals. The holes fill with water making it more difficult to find worms. Again, I have had to walk away to find more productive areas because of this.

Worm harvesters do not ask for tax payers money to study and potentially regulate shellfish harvest. We simply mind our own business and move on. We did, however, in 1967, start paying extra for our licenses - extra money intended for research to help the worm resource because the harvesters do care about the future of the resource. The research that exists indicates that the worm resource is managed by market driven forces and harvest efficiency is varied, but most often it is below 40% .We already do re-seeding programs with cull worms; we just don't have documentation because it is not required. No one eats worms, so there is no need to track where they came from or get returned to. As a matter of fact, the industries self-sufficiency allows the DMR to spend more time on shellfish and water quality issues because we are not asking for much.

We have started a worm associations Several diggers, including myself, have personally been trying to build a better working relationship with DMR. I would ask that these municipalities leave marine worm harvesters us alone so that we can continue to work with DMR to ensure that any future conservation measure proposed to the marine worm industry is based on accountable research for the enhancement of the marine worm resource.

In short, I would strongly urge this committee not to pass L.D. 178. It is a repeat of studies already conducted and any monies allocated are better reserved for other projects.

Thank you for your time. Daniel Harrington. Life long harvester, President of the IMMWhA , and committee chair of the Woolwich Shellfish committee.