

127th Legislature
Senate of
Maine
Senate District 24

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Joint Standing Committees:
Criminal Justice & Public Safety
Government Oversight

Testimony in Support of LD 255, *An Act To Preserve the Integrity of Maine's Shellfish Industry by Increasing the Penalty for Interfering with Permitted Harvest*

Select Committees:
Joint Rules
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Senatorial Vote

**Presented before the Marine Resources Committee
February 25, 2015**

Senator Baker, Representative Kumiega and honorable members of the Joint Standing Committee on Marine Resources: my name is Senator Stan Gerzofsky, and I am here to present LD 255, *An Act to Preserve the Integrity of Maine's Shellfish Industry by Increasing the Penalty for Interfering with Permitted Harvest*.

This bill is a continuation of legislation we successfully passed last session to support and protect Maine's clam industry.

As we all know, many municipalities that we represent, such as Brunswick, invest a significant amount of time, money and energy into creating a sustainable shellfish harvesting management plan every year. This means that juvenile shellfish are allowed to sit undisturbed until they reach a harvestable size or they are relayed to another growing area for grow out. It also helps protect against green crabs, which are invasive and are causing immediate damage to Maine's clams and industry.

At the same time, over the past few years, we have seen a drastic increase in the amount of worm harvesting on the flats, and as a result, we have noticed that this excessive marine worm harvesting has caused a decrease in our juvenile shellfish stock. I realize that both the soft shell clam and marine worm industries are vital to Maine's coastal economy and that cooperation is needed to develop predator control strategies to mitigate the effects of green crabs. Both industries have an economic interest in properly managing the intertidal zone in a way that does not disadvantage either user group.

As an example, Brunswick mud flats employ over 50 commercial license holders and provide for hundreds of recreational permits, creating nearly \$2 million dollars in local revenue annually.

Testimony of Senator Gerzofsky
LD 255 - Marine Resources Committee
February 25, 2015

Because there is so much on the line for many hard-working Maine people, the bill before you today would increase the fine for a person who interferes with the ability of a person who holds a municipal shellfish aquaculture permit to carry out the privileges granted under their permit. This bill also specifies that the area in which the interference is prohibited is the intertidal zone in the area that is included in the permit and clarifies that the prohibited action includes disturbing or molesting shellfish, not only the taking of shellfish.

Thank you for the opportunity to present this bill. I hope you can support it and help support our hard-working clambers.