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Testimony of Representative Michael G. Devin

In Support of L.D. 493

"An Act to Create the Ocean Acidification Council"

Before the Joint Standing Committee on Marine Resources

Wednesday, March 11, 2015

Senator Baker, Representative Kumiega and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Marine Resources, I am Representative Mick Devin, serving House District 90, which includes Bremen, Bristol, Damariscotta, Newcastle, parts of Nobleboro and South Bristol, Monhegan Island and Louds Island. As the sponsor of L.D. 493, I am here today to speak in support of its passage.

Recently, the Ocean Acidification Commission released its final report, which I must stress was voted out unanimously. The Commission's report contains six recommendations, of which one is to establish the Ocean Acidification Council for at least three years. Ocean Acidification is a complex phenomenon that we have only recently recognized as a problem. It crosses the border of at least three different departments in the Executive Branch and has the potential to cause over a billion dollars of damage within our coastal waters. We have a long way to go before we fully understand it and can create marine policy to mitigate its potential impacts to our marine economy.

The Ocean Acidification Council, which might be more aptly named the Ocean Acidification Coordinating Council, will bring state agencies together to share information; serve as the recognized entity within the state to be the point of contact on OA and a clearing house for federal issues, science developments, bonding, etc.; sharing data, information and developments between scientists, NGOs, commercial industries (e.g., commercial fishing and aquaculture industries) and all stakeholders; and serve as the table or vehicle to provide a forum to facilitate others to implement OA recommendations.

To minimize my testimony I have attached a sheet, which outlines the structure the OA Coordinating Council, its purpose and responsibilities and some recommended changes. I ask you to refer to it and am happy to take any questions.

District 90 Bremen, Bristol, Damariscotta, Newcastle, Nobleboro (part), South Bristol (part) and Monhegan Plantation, plus the unorganized territory of Louds Island

Ocean Acidification Coordinating Council

LD 493, An Act to Create the Ocean Acidification Coordinating Council (OACC) will have its public hearing in the Marine Resources Committee on Wednesday March 11th, 2015 at 1 pm. The MAR Committee meets in Room 206 of the Cross Building which is adjacent to the State Capital. The following are recommended changes to LD 493 and or further explanations.

1. Establishment and Purpose

Including, but not limited to:

- a. Bring state agencies together to share information;
- b. Serve as the recognized entity within the State to be the Point of Contact on OA and clearing house for federal issues, science developments, bonding, etc.;
- c. Sharing data, information and developments between scientists, NGOs, commercial industries (e.g., commercial fishing and aquaculture industries) and all stakeholders; and [Note 1. Discuss with Coastal Programs]
- d. Serve as the table or vehicle to provide a forum to facilitate others to implement OA recommendations.

2. Membership

- a. Council make up is recommended to remain the same as the OA Commission with the exception to add the Maine Water Environment Association; and
- b. Number of legislators should be discussed.

3. Responsibilities and duties

- a. Hold at least three meetings annually;
- b. Accept public comment by the following:
 - i. Meetings will be public and advertised; and
 - ii. Meetings will allow for public comment (with written testimony or comments encouraged)
- c. Present an annual status of implementation to the Marine Resources Committee and the three state agencies with oversight of OA related issues;
- d. The annual status MAY include recommendations for legislation, thus should be presented to the MAR Committee to coincide with the Legislature's session schedule; and

e. See Sec. 2.8 for complete list.

4. Staffing

- a. It is recommended that the MAR Committee analyst participate to provide a smooth transfer of information between the OA Coordinating Council (OACC) and MAR Committee, especially if legislation is recommended; and
- b. Additionally, council members can be assigned (or volunteer) for specific staffing responsibilities.

5. Appointment Process

- a. We recommend that the appointment process move from the Governor to Commissioner of the Dept. of Marine Resources; and
- b. Except for the legislators who would be appointed by the Speaker of the House. [Note 2. Number of legislators on the OACC should be discussed]

6. Funding

- a. The design and scope of OACC will limit its cost; and
- b. Private and other public funds will be solicited if needed.