

**TESTIMONY OF
Deirdre Gilbert,
Director, State Marine Policy**

**The Department of Marine Resources (DMR) is testifying
in Opposition to**

**L.D. 493, An Act To Create the Ocean Acidification Council
Sponsored by Representative Devin
Date of Hearing: March 11, 2015**

Senator Baker, Representative Kumiega, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Marine Resources, my name is Deirdre Gilbert, Director of State Marine Policy at the Department of Marine Resources, and I am testifying on behalf of the Department in opposition to LD 493.

The Department appreciates and supports the work that was done by the Ocean Acidification Commission. Certainly there are many good recommendations resulting from their efforts that should be pursued. Our concern is that the structure proposed – a new Council – is not the most appropriate vehicle to carry these recommendations forward. There are several entities, including the University, and multiple NGO's, that have made this topic a focus of their work. It seems that a coalition of groups with an interest in this topic, would be as effective at keeping this important topic in the forefront of discussion.

Typically, legislatively created Councils with membership including legislators would be staffed by the Office of Policy and Legal Analysis, as was the Ocean Acidification Commission. Our understanding is that that model was not pursued in order to avoid a fiscal note. Further the legislation specifies that if outside funding for staff is not obtained, the Department of Marine Resources and the Department of Environmental Protection would staff the Council "within existing resources". DMR would be happy to continue to participate in conversations as staff resources allow, but we cannot provide staff support for such an effort within existing resources.

Thank you for your consideration, and I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.