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Maine Chapter

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To: The Joint Standing Committee on Marine Resources
Re: LD 493
Date: March 11, 2015

Dear Senator Baker, Representative Kumiega and the Joint Committee on Marine Resources

I am writing to represent Sierra Club Maine and our 14,000 members and activists across Maine to urge your support of LD493.

As the committee is aware, the threat of Ocean Acidification (OA) is greatest in the Gulf of Maine and is already impacting our precious shellfish industry. *“The Gulf of Maine, which extends from Cape Cod to Nova Scotia, is especially vulnerable to acidification, because carbon dioxide is absorbed more easily in colder water, and much of the region’s economy relies on the sea life that is most likely to suffer*.”* Not only does the industry provide important economic benefit to the state, but many of our residents are able to survive the winters by accessing mudflats for shellfish harvesting during that time. On North Haven, mussels have all but disappeared much to the consternation of the entire year round and summer communities who have depended upon our ability to harvest them.

Developing an Ocean Acidification Council which will monitor the onset and severity of OA and propose legislative responses to preventable human causes of acidification is extremely important. And, including members of the fishing community, marine scientists as well as representatives from the legislature and agencies will have a broad impact going forward. Maine should be in the lead on developing clear and direct guidance as we are confronted by rising acidification- increased precipitation events, sea level rise and temperature gradients. Our historic way of life prior to contact and afterwards has depended upon the ocean for food. We must do what we can to protect that resource so that it can continue to be part of our sustenance, both commercially and recreationally.

LD 493 is the logical extension of the work previously done by the Legislature to examine OA. We urge this committee to vote “ought to pass”.

Respectfully Submitted,

Becky Layton Bartovics, Co Chair

*<http://www.bostonglobe.com/metro/2015/03/07/oceans-become-more-acidic-fears-rise-shellfish-industry/Js67Ckm9iz5VD3uSXR4mN/story.html>