

STATE OF MAINE

—
IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD
TWO THOUSAND AND SIXTEEN

—
H.P. 294 - L.D. 427

Resolve, Directing Certain State Agencies To Consider the Effects of Marine Debris

Preamble. Whereas, the ocean environment and its resources are vital to the economy, cultural identity and daily lives of many Maine citizens and communities; and

Whereas, coastal residents and communities in Maine depend on healthy and abundant ocean resources for their livelihoods, recreation and ways of life; and

Whereas, the oceans annually receive an estimated 4,800,000 to 12,700,000 metric tons of plastic waste; and

Whereas, there is a projected increase in the amount of plastic marine debris based on current production and consumption; and

Whereas, plastics of all sizes have been shown to adsorb micropollutants and organic contaminants in the environment; and

Whereas, large pieces of plastic, including plastics from recreational and commercial fishing, marine vessels and marine fishing gear, degrade into progressively smaller fragments through chemical and physical processes, eventually resulting in microscopic particles of plastic that remain in the environment indefinitely; and

Whereas, plastics are a recognized contaminant of concern that threatens wildlife and human health; and

Whereas, a wide range of organisms, from zooplankton to mussels to fish to baleen whales, are capable of ingesting contaminated microplastics; and

Whereas, consumption of contaminated species is thought to increase the potential for harm to human health from hazardous chemicals; and

Whereas, Maine persons who fish commercially land approximately 305,500,000 pounds of seafood annually for human consumption and one study estimates European shellfish consumers consume between 1,800 and 11,000 microplastics per year; and

Whereas, marine debris can be large but difficult to see in the ocean if partially or totally submerged, and a vessel that encounters marine debris at sea can suffer costly damage, either to its structure or through a tangled propeller or clogged intake; and

Whereas, marine debris can be a vector for invasive species, which can have a devastating impact on local fisheries and ecosystems and can be costly to manage or eradicate; and

Whereas, increasing marine debris has the potential to threaten livelihoods and activities that have been at the core of Maine's coastal communities for hundreds of years; now, therefore, be it

Sec. 1. Department of Marine Resources, Department of Environmental Protection, Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife and Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry to consider the effects of marine debris. Resolved: That, until January 1, 2019, when the Department of Marine Resources, Department of Environmental Protection, Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife or Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry takes any action, that department shall consider the marine debris that may be generated by that action, the effects of marine debris that may be generated by that action and how the potential marine debris may be managed and mitigated.