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Testimony of Senator Anne Carney supporting
**LD 1286, Resolve, to Establish the Blue Economy Task Force to Support
Maine’s Emergence as a Center for Blue Economy Innovation and
Opportunity in the 21st Century**
*Before the Joint Standing Committee on Innovation, Development, Economic Advancement,
and Business*
April 11, 2023

Senator Curry, Representative Roberts, and Esteemed Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Innovation, Development, Economic Advancement, and Business, my name is Anne Carney, and I proudly represent Senate District 29, which includes South Portland, Cape Elizabeth, and part of Scarborough. Today I am pleased to testify in support of LD 1286, “Resolve, to Establish the Blue Economy Task Force to Support Maine’s Emergence as a Center for Blue Economy Innovation and Opportunity in the 21st Century.”

Senate District 29 is a coastal district in which lobstering, fishing, and mariculture play an extremely important economic and cultural role. Many current residents make a living through these traditional Maine industries. Families that have lived in Senate District 29 have for centuries earned their living the same way. Today we also see strong connections between other aspects of the region’s economy – including hospitality – and the sea. Four state parks and multiple municipal parks line the shores of Senate District 29 and attract visitors from around the world to our community and to the state of Maine.

I strongly support the fundamental concept of LD 1286: We should be working together and thinking of the connections among the many aspects of the “blue economy” in order to foster economic growth in Maine, promote well-being among those who live in coastal communities, and maintain a healthy ecosystem. I urge you, however, to provide more emphasis on the need to protect the ocean and shore environment. Please amend the resolve to expand the scope of work related to Maine’s blue economy to include opportunities to address the harm that is being caused by climate change and emphasize the potential of this plan to mitigate some of the effects of climate change.

[Maine Won't Wait](#), our 2020 climate action plan, points to some important steps that fall directly within the scope of blue economy planning. The climate action plan calls for “[t]echnical assistance and financial incentives [that] will help Maine’s fishing and aquaculture, farming, and

forestry businesses and landowners prepare for the rapidly intensifying impacts of climate change. Maine should provide clear information, forecasts, and tools about climate-change impacts that are relevant to business planning, operations, and management.” (Maine Won’t Wait, pg. 66.) Existing industries must receive information and tools to make good planning, operational, and investment decisions. (Id., pg. 70.) A framework for these resources should be part of the blue economy conversation.

Even more exciting is the potential for blue economy planning to incorporate opportunities to mitigate some effects of climate change. For example, Maine Won't Wait notes the “opportunities for seaweed aquaculture to enhance long-term carbon burial and to support targeted reductions of coastal acidification.” (Id., pg. 79.) In addition, kelp farming can improve water quality and locally reduce acidification. The environmental benefits that could be incorporated into our blue economy planning already comprise a part of Maine’s climate action plan, and should also feature prominently in the planning process that I hope is created by amendment and passage of LD 1286.

Many thanks for your consideration of my comments on this vitally important issue.



Anne Carney
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South Portland, Cape Elizabeth, and part of Scarborough