



Community Shellfish Co.

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Testimony to Support LD 2225

March 5, 2024

The Honorable Senator Rotundo, Chair

The Honorable Representative Sachs, Chair

The Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs.

Cross Building, Room 206

Augusta, ME. 04333

Senator Robusto, Representative Sachs, and Honorable Members of The Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs.

I am John Marsh. I am the owner and CEO of Community Shellfish Co. in Bremen, Maine. I am also a selectman of The Town of Bremen for the record. Thank you for providing me the opportunity to speak with you this morning. I am writing to you today to testify in support of LD 2225, "An Act to Provide Funding to Rebuild Infrastructure Affected by Extreme Inland and Coastal Weather Events".

Community Shellfish Co. is a diversified shellfish company with operations in clam and clam processing, lobster dealer and servicing center, landing and dealers in related species, and oyster kelp aquaculture. We have 18 to 24 full-time and seasonal employees.

Our working waterfront in Bremen is a lobster harbor and dealer servicing approximately 37-40 lobster boats, 3-5 Scallop boats, 3-5 bait fishermen and starting next year 7-10 Kelp Farming operations whose participants do include off-season activities of our lobster boats. Our working waterfront provides invaluable infra-structure to all these activities via its direct access to the ocean, mooring facilities, fuel and supplies capabilities, docks and stone wharfs, cranes and oceanside refrigeration, processing and storage facilities for value-added activities and marketing and sales departments. Our aquaculture operations at the same location employs 3-5 people full time and seasonally and is working with UMaine DMC to innovate in the commercial aquaculture space.

I have enumerated the activities and participants to illustrate the number of people and families who are reliant on a strong and resilient working waterfront for their livelihoods. Between employees and fishermen 80 to 120 families derive their income from our company's operations. For example, for every

lobster boat, there is typically a captain and a stern man. That means that most likely two families are dependent on the ability to work per boat. One can calculate the immense importance of a single working waterfront harbor to the families and communities of Coastal Maine.

In a time rife with challenges coming from changing climate and warming waters, species shift and fisheries volatility, increasing regulatory challenges, it is absolutely vital that the infra-structure of working waterfront remain robust so that this most valuable part of the Maine economy can adapt to changing conditions and innovate into the future with new products and technologies. As we all know, once working waterfront is gone, it is gone for good but if it survives, it will be an incredibly bright and spectacular thing; bringing our coastal communities economic stability and healthy and sustainable food for the world for generations to come.

I also must state that, as a town selectman, I'm acutely aware of the critical importance of these funds for building resilience in community and public infrastructure. Flooded roadways and washed-out culverts create public safety hazards and lower the standard of living and increase the risks for families and communities. Small coastal towns like Bremen need partnership from the state to make the level of investment necessary to build resiliency and opportunity for its citizens in the face of our changing climate and the evermore frequent extreme weather events.

Thus, I fully support this bill that will be invaluable to working waterfront and vulnerable communities in helping them to recover from the devastating storms of January 2024 and future events.

Sincerely,

John B Marsh

John Marsh
CEO
Community Shellfish Co.