



Town of Brunswick, Maine

INCORPORATED 1739

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Daniel Devereaux

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RE: LD 646 – Resolve, Establishing the Commission to Study Unregulated Stormwater Pollution

Honorable Senators and Representatives of the Environment and Natural Resources Committee,

I am writing to express my strong support for LD 646, as our coastal waters face an increasing threat from non-point source pollution caused by unregulated stormwater runoff. This growing issue demands immediate attention if we are to safeguard Maine's natural resources, economy, and public health.

My name is Dan Devereaux. I am the Coastal Resource Manager for the Town of Brunswick, a retired Harbormaster and Marine Warden of 23 years, and my family has been farming and harvesting shellfish for over a decade in Brunswick. I have lived and worked on and around Northern Casco Bay since 1992. Over these years—especially in the last six—I have witnessed firsthand the devastating impacts of stormwater runoff on our coastal waters.

The Growing Threat of Stormwater Pollution

As coastal residential development surges, the creation of impervious surfaces—rooftops, driveways, and roads—funnels untreated stormwater directly into our waters. Fertilizers, pesticides, and chemicals used to maintain pristine lawns, along with wastewater from failing or poorly built septic systems, pose significant risks when they seep into drainage areas and streams, ultimately contaminating our coastal waters.

Additionally, while climate-resilient infrastructure projects, such as the installation of larger culverts, are necessary for flood mitigation, they also increase the volume and velocity of stormwater runoff entering our waterways. Without proper regulation and mitigation measures in place, these improvements will exacerbate pollution problems, further threatening the health of our marine ecosystems.

The Economic and Environmental Consequences

Maine is already experiencing more frequent and intense rainfall events, leading to higher volumes of stormwater runoff. This runoff carries bacteria, harmful chemicals, and excess nutrients into our rivers, bays, and coastal waters. This is not just an environmental issue—it is a direct threat to Maine's economy, public health, and coastal communities.

One of the most visible and devastating effects of nutrient pollution is the increased frequency of algal blooms. These blooms:

- Deplete oxygen levels in the water, leading to fish and shellfish die-offs.
- Smother clam flats and shellfish beds, reducing harvests and endangering harvesting and farming operations.

- Pose serious risks to public health, as some algal blooms produce toxins that can contaminate coastal waters and seafood posing significant risk to public health.

In Brunswick alone, the shellfishing industry contributes over \$4.2 million annually to the local economy and supports hundreds of jobs. The industry is already facing challenges due to warming waters, habitat loss, and pollution. Unregulated stormwater runoff is compounding these pressures, threatening the livelihoods of harvesters and the long-term sustainability of shellfish farming.

When shellfish growing areas are classified as unsafe due to pollution, both wild harvesters and aquaculture farmers lose critical income. As these issues persist and worsen, we risk permanently disrupting an industry that has sustained Maine's coastal communities for generations.

LD 646: A Necessary Step Toward Solutions

LD 646 is a critical first step toward developing an informed and effective strategy to address unregulated stormwater pollution. By establishing a study commission, Maine will:

- Assess the extent of stormwater pollution and its direct impacts on water quality.
- Develop science-based, cost-effective solutions to mitigate stormwater runoff before it causes further harm.
- Ensure a sustainable future for Maine's fisheries, aquaculture, and coastal economy.

We must act now before these problems worsen and become more expensive to fix. Preventing pollution is far more cost-effective than trying to restore degraded waters after the damage is done.

I urge you to support LD 646 and take decisive action to protect Maine's waters for future generations.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Daniel Devereaux

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