

Testimony in Support of LD 646

Dear Members of the Environment and Natural Resources Committee,

My name is Sarah Beard. I live in Freeport. I am writing to express my strong support for LD 646. Freeport's shallow coastal waters, and the wildlife, fisheries, oyster aquaculture, clamming and tourism that depend on these waters, are put at risk by stormwater pollution.

When it rains, stormwater washes off roads and parking lots, carrying pollution including chemicals and excess fertilizers into our rivers and then into coastal waters. This pollution affects not only our environment but our economy, and our health.

For those of us who depend on clean water for our livelihoods, the stakes are high. When clam flats close due to bacteria contamination, harvesters lose critical income. When algal blooms smother clam flats, they threaten marine life and disrupt fisheries. And when chemicals such as PFAS flush into our waters, they can make our food unsafe to eat, put our harvests at risk and harm aquatic life.

LD 646 would allow Maine to develop informed, effective strategies to prevent stormwater pollution before it does more harm. Addressing this issue now will save money, because preventing pollution is far more cost-effective than trying to restore damaged waters.

I urge you to support LD 646. Clean coastal waters are an important part of what makes Maine so special. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Sarah Beard

Freeport, ME

