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I have lived in the shores of Casco Bay for my entire life. As a child in the early 1960s, I swam at Casine Beach in Cape Elizabeth seeing the evidence of open sewers. We didn't understand the damage or dangers. Everyone said it would just wash out into the ocean.

Now, the damage of stormwater drainage is damaging the entire ecosystem of Casco Bay. I have lived on Chebeague Island off and on my entire life, and now reside on the island. I can see firsthand the damaging impact of water quality: fewer clams, thinner shells on the clams. We used to fill a basket of clams in 15 minutes, now we are lucky to dig a gallon. I remember starfish and mussels, sand dollars and little yellow littorina shells, razor clams....almost all are gone now. I always loved snorkeling above the sea grass flats at low tide. The sea grass is gone now as well. The pollution of Casco Bay has not "washed out into the ocean." It has settled into the entire bay. The vibrant aquatic life is almost gone.

My island community depends upon the health of the bay for fishing and aquatic activities. I see the next generation of fisherman adapting but working harder than ever - despite better and safer equipment. They tell stories of how Casco Bay no longer supports a healthy environment for sea life. This is an industry that must be saved! The fisherman are good stewards of the resource, but it seems the largest threat is water quality.

Great strides have been made since I swam in tainted beach water - but this damage is more threatening. The health of the entire Casco Bay is beyond at risk, but is threatened with irrefutable harm. I hope the damage can be mitigated.

When people stayed on the shores of Casco Bay, perhaps at the Eastern Prom, and look over Casco Bay, please know that dirty water from the sewage and streets has been causing the strangulation of aquatic life as far as the eye can see.

Please take action and improve the health of Casco Bay!