

Phoebe Jekielek
Rockland
LD 1279

Letter to the Committee on Marine Resources - in Support of LD 1279, An Act to Support the Growth of Maine's Farmed Atlantic Sea Scallop Industry Through Funding Biotoxin Testing and Other Services.

Dear Senator Tepler, Representative Hepler and Members of the Marine Resources Committee:

My name is Phoebe Jekielek, I am a resident of Rockland, ME, and I am here to speak in favor of LD 1279 to support the growth of Maine's Farmed Atlantic Sea Scallop Industry. I have been working with both wild harvest and farmed scallop industries since 2013 and continue to conduct research on the biologies and ecologies of farmed and wild scallops.

A toxin monitoring effort for cultured scallops will help decrease barriers to entry into this emerging industry by providing consistent and temporally and spatially diverse data on the retention of biotoxins in scallop tissues. The existing data on biotoxins is promising in that we may be able to identify certain times of year where biotoxin retention is most concerning, and can make regulations to accommodate that, but we need more consistent data and from beyond Penobscot Bay. More data is always better.

There are many leases out there listing scallops as a species to grow, but very few are growing. Testing could increase the number of farms engaging in scallop aquaculture by informing a pathway to further establishing and growing a whole scallop market in Maine and beyond. This pilot project may also pave the way to developing processes and protocols for other potentially harvestable species that may require similar assessments as they expand. This program will decrease barriers to entry for interested parties as well as barriers to growth for existing farms.

I had the delicious opportunity just a few weeks ago to gorge myself on some whole scallops raised on Marsden Brewer's farm and even cooked by the man himself. It was the best meal I've had this year so far, and I really like to eat!

Again, I support LD1279 in the hopes of continued growth and success of the scallop aquaculture industry here in Maine. Please fund this pilot project for the following two years to collect essential data.

Thank you very much for your time and have a great day!

Phoebe Jekielek
Rockland, ME