

Virginia Olsen  
Stonington  
LD 1279

Good afternoon, Senator Tepler, Representative Hepler, and honorable members of the Marine Resources Committee. My name is Virginia Olsen, I am a fisherman from Stonington, ME.

I urge you to support LD 1279 An Act to Require the Department of Marine Resources to Conduct Biotoxin Testing of Cultured Scallops.

In the past, the department has offered a pay-to-test program- I don't think many folks used it. Why, you may ask, would I support it? We want to make sure we give our harvesters or growers every opportunity to participate in value-added products. Scallops are shelled at sea in Maine- the little orange and white roe is discarded with everything but the adductor muscle (what we eat). Roe is very popular with Michelin-star restaurants, wanting to elevate their customers' dining experience. Why are scallops considered a high risk? Scallops filter over a gallon of water an hour- if biotoxins are present in the water, then the scallop will concentrate those biotoxins, making whoever eats them very sick. With a good sampling protocol, Maine could be a leader in the high-end restaurant world. This is the definition of value-added products. The report back period should be long enough to see any trends that could raise concerns. I also think this should be opened up to any grower, or dealer of farm-raised scallops.

I would be happy to answer any questions.

Thank you,  
Virginia Olsen