



May 1, 2025

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

My name is Togue Brawn, I'm a resident of Bath, Maine, and I work out of a seafood processing plant in Bremen, Maine. I'm asking you to support LD 1279 to support the growth of Maine's Farmed Atlantic Sea Scallop Industry.

I worked for the Maine Department of Marine Resources from 2007 to 2011, and in that time I helped craft regulations to make Maine's scallop fishery more sustainable. Restoring our scallop resource was important, because Maine's commercial fishing industry was (and is) dangerously reliant on one species: lobster. Diversification is, critically important to the long term viability our fishing communities. Scallops represent a fantastic opportunity, because although we currently produce only 2-3% of US sea scallops, they are vastly superior to the scallops produced by the much larger offshore fleet. Did you know that Maine's bays produce scallops with different flavor profiles? They are all delicious, and I'm proud to have helped make Maine's scallop fishery more sustainable.

We now have an opportunity to grow that industry even more. When I was at DMR, I wanted to try to find a way to support the harvest of whole scallops, or at the very least, scallops with the roe attached. But because resources were limited I was always told "There's absolutely no way that's going to happen, Togue." Well, in the years since I left DMR, it did happen. DMR, Sea Grant, CEI and of course Marsden Brewer have worked to show that it's possible to grow and consume whole scallops from Maine's inshore waters. Now that we know it can be done, the time has come to find resources to help grow the industry.

Whether it's lantern nets or lines or even the newly patented cages similar to lobster traps, scallop farming represents a fabulous opportunity for small boat fishermen to diversify their income stream. But it's not going to happen if fishermen have to bear the full cost of biotoxin monitoring. I truly believe Maine can become the Mecca of scallops. We will never compete with New Bedford when it comes to quantity. But we will beat them every time when it comes to quality. Maine is the only state capable of producing farmed sea scallops, and we need supply in order to build market. I hope you'll support this bill, and help find a way to fund it, because it would be a shame to miss this great opportunity.

Yours, truly,

**Raising scallop expectations one taste at a time**

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