

Good Afternoon,
Senator Cameron Reny, Representative Allison Helper and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Marine Resources.

My name is Kelsey Fenwick, and I am a sternman fishing out of Port Clyde. Additionally, I am a consultant to Protect Maine's Fishing Heritage Foundation, an organization that opposes industrial scale aquaculture but supports small scale owner-operator aquaculture.

I have been lobstering up and down the coast of Maine for around 10 years now, and in that time I've grown passionate about protecting the Gulf of Maine and it's many resources.

As you are aware, the Gulf of Maine is under exceeding pressure, from offshore wind farm development to industrial scale aquaculture to environmental changes.

Rockweed is important to preserving a healthy marine ecosystem. Rockweed provides food, habitat, carbon dioxide reduction, and erosion protection. As a primary producer, rockweed serves as a base food source that supports the entire foodweb. Rockweed traps sediments and heavy metals, reducing algal blooms. Rockweed's buffering effect protects intertidal zones: reducing the impacts of storm surges and combating rising sea levels.

I oppose this bill because I fear turning rockweed into a large scale commercial fishery is going to lead to the depletion of the natural population, which will definitely have a negative impact on our coastal ecosystems. If ocean acidification is a risk to the Gulf of Maine, this bill does not stand to help. If shoreline erosion and rising sea levels are a concern, this bill does not help combat those either. We need rockweed in order to have a healthy Gulf of Maine.

I strongly encourage the council to vote no on this bill in order to protect the Gulf of Maine and our precious marine ecosystem. Thank you for your time.

LD 2003 An Act to Protect Access to Maine's Intertidal Zone

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