



# HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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*Testimony of Representative Holly Eaton introducing*  
**LD 1279, An Act to Require the Department of Marine Resources to**  
**Conduct Biotoxin Testing of Cultured Scallops**  
*Before the Joint Standing Committee on Marine Resources*

Senator Tepler, Representative Hepler and honorable colleagues of the Marine Resources Committee, my name is Holly Eaton, and I represent House District 15, which includes the island and coastal communities of Deer Isle, Stonington, Brooklin, Tremont, Southwest Harbor, Frenchboro, Swan's Island, Isle au Haut and Vinalhaven. I'm proud to sponsor **LD 1279, An Act to Require the Department of Marine Resources to Conduct Biotoxin Testing of Cultured Scallops**. As you'll see in my Sponsor's Amendment, the purpose of this bill is to establish a two-year pilot project to support biotoxin testing for cultured scallops in Maine.

This bill is the result of thoughtful collaboration and hard work by fishermen, researchers and organizations like Coastal Enterprises Inc. While I am not the science expert—that will come through in the testimony that follows—I care deeply about making sure that rural and island communities have the tools and support they need to stay economically strong and resilient.

LD 1279 supports that future by addressing one of the biggest barriers facing scallop aquaculture: access to affordable, consistent biotoxin testing for whole scallops and roe. It proposes a pilot program through the Department of Marine Resources, includes logistical support such as providing transportation of samples for testing, and sets clear expectations for reporting and future planning. It's a small, smart investment in a fishery that is ready to grow—and one that I hope will ultimately become a permanent part of the state budget.

This effort wouldn't be possible without the work of PenBay Scallops, run by Marsden, Bobby and Donna Brewer. Their family brought this scallop farming method to Maine after learning from Japanese farmers, and they've spent years proving that this model works. Just last week, I had the honor of visiting their farm with my sons, Sam and Harbor. We were out on the water, pulling up lines, learning from Marsden and Bobby, and yes—tasting raw scallops straight from the sea (see photos at the end of my testimony!).

That day will stay with me forever. Watching my boys light up with curiosity and joy reminded me of why I ran for office in the first place. We need to make decisions now that will allow

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families like mine—and like the Brewers’—to continue living and working in these coastal communities for generations to come.

Earlier this session, I had the opportunity to bring things full circle by sponsoring and testifying in support of Representative Ellie Sato’s bill to establish a sisterhood between Maine and Japan. Her family worked closely with the Brewers, and LD 1279 feels like part of that same story—one of shared knowledge, deep respect and cross-cultural collaboration.

As Marsden will share in his remarks, this bill is also about equity. We’re not asking for special treatment—just a level playing field. But beyond that, this bill reduces a major barrier for those who are considering getting into scallop aquaculture. We want to support innovation, not stifle it. This is forward-thinking policy that helps build community, expand opportunity and make it more feasible for the next generation to enter and grow in this fishery.

Not everyone who has contributed to this project is testifying today, but they stand ready to support this effort at the work session or beyond. I want to thank all of them—past and present—for their years of vision and dedication.

This is exactly the kind of community-rooted investment that will keep our coastal and island towns strong for the long term. Thank you for your time, your care and your commitment to this coast. I respectfully urge your support for LD 1279.



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