



Denise Tepler
Senator, District 24

THE MAINE SENATE
132nd Legislature

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Testimony of Senator Denise Tepler introducing
LD 1991, "An Act to Authorize an Educational Requirement for Seaweed Permit Holders"
before the Joint Standing Committee on Marine Resources
February 5, 2026

Representative Hepler and my fellow Members of the Marine Resources Committee, I am Senator Denise Tepler, representing Senate District 24, which includes all of Sagadahoc County, the Town of Dresden, and Perkins Township. I come before you today to introduce LD 1991, "**An Act to Authorize an Educational Requirement for Seaweed Permit Holders**," on behalf of the Department of Marine Resources.

The Department of Marine Resources was notified by members of the Seaweed Fisheries Advisory Council that, in some instances, it would be beneficial to have seaweed farmers meet a basic training requirement to receive a license for seaweed harvesting. It is worth noting that the Department already utilizes similar educational requirements in some targeted situations: Lobster and crab non-commercial licenses, Limited Purpose Aquaculture licenses, and elver licenses all require the completion of relevant educational courses. The Department has formulated this bill to implement this requirement for this industry. Crucially, the bill allows for the Department to limit educational requirements to those who are seeking a license for the first time, along with those who are renewing their licenses.

This legislation comes at the request of leaders from the rockweed industry, and it would ensure that seaweed harvesting can thrive in Maine through educated industry members using sustainable and responsible practices. I hope you will join me in supporting this legislation.