

March 15, 2021

Senator Stacy Brenner
Representative Ralph Tucker
Environment and Natural Resources Committee
c/o Legislative Information Office
100 State House Station Augusta, ME 04333
ENR@legislature.maine.gov

Re: Mary Ann Nahf's Testimony in Support of LD 593: An Act to Restore Regular Eelgrass Mapping and Enhance Salt Marsh Vegetation Mapping in the State

Dear Senator Brenner, Representative Tucker, and Esteemed Members of the Environment and Natural Resources Committee,

I am Mary Ann Nahf, a resident in the Town of Harpswell; an island community with 216 miles of ocean shoreline with numerous coves in Casco Bay. As a member of the Marine Resources Committee, Chair of the Conservation Commission and Climate Resilience Implementation Task Force, I am speaking today in favor of LD593, An Act to Restore Regular Eelgrass and Salt Marsh Mapping in the State.

In 2017 Harpswell's landed value of its fisheries was \$26.8 million, making it a major and vital part of Harpswell's economy; having an impact on its residents and the many tourists who visit. The townspeople recognize the importance of healthy eelgrass beds and coastal marshes. It values the habitat they provide, how they act as nurseries for baby lobsters and various shellfish species and are an indicator of clean water. Our many coves can act as pockets where excessive runoff causes nitrogen pollution, ocean acidity and dead mud. Up to date mapping will provide the harvesters an additional tool in their conservation toolbox as they continue to monitor, trying to determine the cause of spat not settling and growing.

Importance of Current information:

As Harpswell begins to update its comprehensive plan to take in account sea level rise; current reference data such as updated eelgrass and salt marsh grasses mapping are even more important.

Our Climate Resilience Task Force is looking at marsh migration and where it might occur. Harpswell's mile long, Long Marsh, at the head of Doughty Cove is the Town's only salt marsh and is a significant carbon sink for our Town. Up to date mapping will provide a base line measurement of the vegetation and allow the Town to continue to monitor changes as tides continue to rise and storm surge affect the marsh and its migration inward.

In conclusion, funding at the State level for mapping on a regular schedule is not only important to State agencies and DEP. Up to date maps will provide an added benefit to local communities.

Marine resource and planning committees will have recent maps for reference as they plan shellfish surveys and review shoreland development applications. As a citizen of Harpswell I respectfully request that this committee unanimously recommend that LD 593 ought to pass.

Thank you for considering my testimony.

Respectfully submitted,



Mary Ann Nahf
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