

Marnie Crowell  
Sunset  
LD 1279

In favor of Farmed scallop Biotoxin Testing bill, LD 1279

I am a natural history writer with a Master of Science degree in Biology, a long-time resident on Deer Isle.

For a number of years I have worked with Marsden Brewer, a well known pioneer in farming sea scallops. My husband Ken is a now-retired ecologist whose research was on the islands off Stonington. We have watched Marsden and his son Bob closely for some years, going out with them on their boat, visiting their shop, and enjoying their scallops. In every way we came to see farming of sea scallops as highly beneficial to the health of Penobscot Bay, potentially a good boost for coast economies, and delicious for the table.

It is clear that making trips to take sea scallop specimens for expensive biotoxin testing is a major obstacle in both time and money. For other cultured species of shellfish in Maine (oysters, blue mussels) shellfish testing is conducted by the MDMR without a fee to the harvesters. I believe it's time to provide dedicated funding by State legislative mandate to help MDMR cover these costs and adopt a policy to treat farmed scallop testing costs similarly to those of other cultured shellfish.

When Marsden once said that people in this country do not know what to do with whole sea scallops, I took that as a challenge. Having traveled around the globe for ecological research, I had some insights into the ways whole scallops are cooked in other countries. Marsden supplied scallops and we cooked and tasted and tested and produced a number of easy and delicious recipes. Down East Books is now in the process of publishing our whole sea scallop cookbook.

As our public becomes more aware of what a treat whole sea scallops are — checking all the right boxes — more of Maine's mariners will be interested in farming sea scallops. It is clear that the current situation forcing sea scallop farmers to make long trips to take sea scallop specimens for expensive biotoxin testing is a major obstacle in both time and money.

The time is right for the legislature to do the right thing and pass LD 1279!

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