

Testimony in support of LD 1279, An Act to Support the Growth of Maine's Farmed Atlantic Sea Scallop Industry Through Funding Biotoxin Testing and Other Services.

Senator Tepler, Representative Hepler and members of the Marine Resources Committee, my name is Don Hudson, retired President of Chewonki in Wiscasset, and a resident of Arrowsic. I have actively supported the establishment of a farmed sea scallop industry in Maine since participating in a Maine delegation visit to the Japanese prefecture of Aomori in October 2010. Fishermen and scientists in Aomori established a first-in-the-world farmed sea scallop industry in 1963, and members of our delegation were very interested to learn more about how this robust industry had grown. A visit by a Maine delegation in the late 1990s had resulted in an effort by Maine lobstermen and Maine Sea Grant Extension scientists to learn how to collect early growth stage scallops called spat. A nascent sea scallop aquaculture industry was poised to take off in Maine.

As a result of our visit, seeds were planted in Maine and Aomori to move from concepts and plans to pilot projects. The owner of an Aomori-based manufacturing company, Hiroaki Sugiyama of Mutzu Kaden, joined delegations visiting Maine from Aomori in 2012 and 2013. As the chair of the Maine Aomori Sister State Advisory Council, I had the opportunity to help keep some attention on the dream of growing scallops in Maine for commercial markets. As our relationship with Sugiyama-san strengthened, in October 2016, Hugh Cowperthwaite of CEI, Dana Morse of Maine Sea Grant Extension, and I led a delegation of Maine lobster fishermen and marine scientists to take a deep dive into scallop aquaculture as it is practiced in Aomori, Japan.

Suffice it to say, our visit in 2016 has resulted in the launch of a commercial Atlantic sea scallop industry in Maine, and LD 1279 is an important next step to ensure its long-term success. Significant private investments have been made to facilitate the transfer of technology from Aomori and Hokkaidō, and Maine fishermen have been nimble in adapting methods and techniques designed for Japanese waters to the different conditions found here on the coast of Maine.

The 2-year pilot project to include cultured scallops and scallop roe in the Marine Shellfish Toxins Monitoring Program at the Department of Marine Resources will provide commercial scallop growers with the same level of rigorous testing that assures the public that scalloped shellfish are safe to eat. When we visited Aomori in 2016 there was no commercial sea scallop aquaculture in Maine. Now, Maine Department of Marine Resources recorded \$1 million in landings in 2024.

Atlantic sea scallop aquaculture is poised to take off in Maine and I believe that it has earned the right to be included in a monitoring and testing program that is aimed, in part, to facilitate the sale of shellfish in the marketplace.