

Colleen Brown
Whiting
LD 1991

Senator Tepler, Representative Hepler, and members of the Committee,
I am submitting this testimony in opposition to LD 1991, "An Act to Authorize an
Educational Requirement for Seaweed Permit Holders."

I support education, training, and best practices in Maine's working waterfront. What I do not support is locking private citizens into statutory education requirements as a condition of earning a living, particularly when those requirements are imposed broadly and without clear limits.

LD 1991 authorizes mandatory education through statute and delegates significant discretion to the Department of Marine Resources to determine what that education entails. Once this authority is embedded in law, it becomes difficult to contain, revise, or roll back, even if the requirements expand beyond their original intent.

Education is most effective when it is voluntary, relevant, and developed collaboratively with the people doing the work. Maine already has tools to promote best practices through guidance, outreach, and industry-led training without creating additional regulatory barriers or compliance burdens for small operators.

This bill risks creating unnecessary hurdles for individuals trying to enter or remain in seaweed harvesting, particularly for small-scale and rural operators. Statutory mandates should be used sparingly and only where clearly necessary to address demonstrated harm. LD 1991 does not meet that standard.

For these reasons, I urge the Committee to vote Ought Not to Pass on LD 1991.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully submitted,
Colleen Brown
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