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| natural legacy icon | **Save Our Shellfish and Coastal Economies from Ocean Acidification** |

**Ocean acidification will be disastrous for Maine’s shellfish and economy. We must research, monitor, and plan to mitigate the damage before it is too late.**

*“We need to get on top of this now before our kids inherit this problem and it’s too late to fix it or adapt,”*

*-Dave Cousens, Maine Lobstermen’s Association.*

**Our oceans are becoming more acidic, and Maine needs to plan for the upcoming emergency**

* Ocean waters off the coast of Maine have already experienced a nearly 30% increase in acidity.
* Maine’s juvenile clams are literally dissolving away, and larvae are avoiding the more acidic mudflats.
* Oyster hatcheries on the west coast have already experienced seasonal production losses of 60-80% due to acidification, and initial studies demonstrate that juvenile lobsters will develop thicker shells, and stunted growth.
* The main cause is that excess carbon dioxide (CO2) in the air is being absorbed by oceans, but nutrient runoff along the coast is also contributing to the problem.

**Over a billion dollars of economic activity and thousands of Maine jobs are at risk**

* Maine is more dependent upon its marine resources than any other state in the northeast.
* Our top two fisheries (lobsters and clams) have nearly 6,000 active harvesters whose jobs are directly threatened, not even including sternmen and other industries.
* The Gulf of Maine waters have already been identified by researchers as being more susceptible to ocean acidification than other regions on the eastern seaboard.

**We can protect our shellfish and coastal jobs, but we must start now**

* There are many potential actions we can take to mitigate acidification: protect seagrass beds, reseed our clam-flats, reduce polluted runoff–but we must better understand the threat first before we will know what is best to do.
* LD 1602 helps us understand the threat. It takes a responsible and low cost approach to a major environmental crisis; it creates a panel of experts from all sectors of the marine community to study the problem and recommend solutions.
* If we better understand the impacts of acidification on commercially important marine species, coastal Maine communities can prepare before it is too late.

**The Legislature should pass:**

***Resolve, Establishing the Commission To Study the Effects of Ocean Acidification and Its Potential Effects on Commercial Shellfish Harvested and Grown along the Maine Coast***

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