

May 14, 2013

Dear Senators Johnson and Kumiega,

We are students from James F. Doughty School in Bangor, Waterville Senior High School, Connors Emerson School in Bar Harbor, Tremont Consolidated School and home schools in Old Town and Bar Harbor. We attended a symposium for students on Coastal Marine Habitat and Climate Change at the Mount Desert Island Biological Laboratory on May 14th, 2013 where we shared marine science related projects we have been working on during the school year.

The focus of the symposium was seaweed. We did phenology field studies of *Ascophyllum* and *Fucus* with Dr. Jessica Muhlin of Maine Maritime Academy at low tide, and listened to a presentation by Dr. Raul Ugarte of Acadian Seaplants Limited in Nova Scotia. We also learned about the proposed legislation (LD 585) that would authorize the DMR to create a seaweed management plan for the state of Maine, and the public hearing that took place on March 20th.

We wanted to add our voices to the discussion, so in the afternoon we held a stakeholder meeting to identify and prioritize threats to seaweed that we think should be addressed in a statewide management plan if LD 585 is passed. (Identifying and prioritizing threats is one step of the Conservation Action Planning process which the Frenchman Bay Partners group is using to develop its Frenchman Bay Plan.) We interviewed members of the community representing stakeholder groups including seaweed harvester Andrea DeFrancesco of Ironbound Island Seaweed, seaweed biologist Dr. Raul Ugarte, climate scientist Caitlin McDonough Mackenzie of Boston University and Acadia National Park, fisherman David Dunton of Bar Harbor, Ornithologist Michael Good of Down East Nature Tours, and coastal landowner Ruth Cserr of Bar Harbor to gain their perspectives, and then prioritized threats to Maine's seaweed resources.

These are the threats we feel are most imperative to address:

1. Climate change, which can include ocean acidification, increased storm events, changes in geographic distribution, extreme fluctuations of temperature, increased freezing events, and changes in the timing of reproduction.

2. Overharvesting due to lack of data, knowledge, and regulation. Harvesting can be sustainable both economically and ecologically if done correctly, but if not it can destroy seaweed habitat and in turn, other fisheries.

Thank you,

Allisen Scully

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