

Chad Coffin

I want to thank Governor LePage and the Natural Resources Council of Maine for hosting this forum, and I'm truly humbled to be here along side many of Maine's great women and men who have each played an important role in making Maine a special place to live and work. My background is special interest in the shellfish industry, specifically the clamming industry.

I've been harvesting clams for over 20 years, commercially, and clamming is one of the oldest commercial fisheries in Maine, dating back to the 1860s, when clams were canned and used as bait in the codfish industry, and George's bank. For codfish along George's bank, sorry about that. Maine clams are the best in the world because they're hand harvested and sustainably harvested from our superior coastal waters. Last year clamming produced 13 million dollars to Maine harvesters alone, three times that amount to the Maine economy, when the economic multiplier is factored in, this is a fishery that is critical to our economy, but often overlooked. However, without excellent water quality, 2,000 Maine clambers that harvest clams are out of business.

Excellent water quality starts in the lakes, ponds, and streams hundreds of miles inland, and ends at the coast. Clamming is critically tied to a healthy environment, we are concerned about threats to the water quality in our industry if the state somehow loses sight of what we have gained in the last decade through new legislation that has helped to clean up and improve the water quality of our coastal waters. We hope that Maine's new business climate and your vision for making Maine an even better place to live and work takes into account the fragile thread that holds our industry and others like it together. If our coastal waters are not clean it's impossible, for all Maine fisheries, not just the clamming industry, to market the Maine brand.

Thank you.

Remarks at "Maine People and the Environment" roundtable with Governor LePage
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