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STATE OF MAINE

ONE HUNDRED AND TWENTY-FOURTH LEGISLATURE

COMMITTEE ON MARINE RESOURCES

MEMORANDUM

TO: Raul Ugarte
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North American Kelp
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FROM: Senator Dennis Damon, Senate Chair *DD*
Representative Leila Percy, House Chair *LJP*
Joint Standing Committee on Marine Resources

DATE: June 10, 2009

SUBJ: Rockweed harvesting in Cobscook Bay, Maine

This year the Legislature enacted LD 345, An Act to Regulate the Rockweed Harvest in Cobscook Bay (Public Law 2009, chapter 283 attached to this letter) that among other things created a Cobscook Bay Rockweed Management area and placed a number of regulations on the commercial harvest of rockweed in Cobscook Bay. That law also directs the Department of Marine Resources to report to this committee by January 15, 2010 on the 2009 seaweed harvest in Cobscook Bay including information about harvester compliance with regulations and the Quoddy Regional Land Trust no-cut registry.

The Marine Resource Committee drafted the language of this law as a result of concerns raised by the public over the commercial harvest of rockweed in Cobscook Bay that included the sustainability of harvest methods and volume, the bycatch impact on other organisms that depend on rockweed and harvest activities that took place in areas where landowners had specifically requested that rockweed not be harvested. We believe that Public Law 2009, chapter 283 strikes

an appropriate balance at this time between all the interested parties and we anticipate that with the full cooperation of harvesters, the Department of Marine resources will be able to report back to us next year that the issues surrounding the controversy that lead to this legislation has been addressed or are in the process of being addressed. However, if needed, this committee has the authority and is prepared to introduce additional legislation next year to ensure the proper management of rockweed harvesting in Cobscook Bay. We hope this will not be necessary and stress that the cooperation of your industry is key to our efforts to sustainably manage Cobscook Bay's natural resources among many different interests.

Thank you for your attention to this very important matter.

cc. Members of the Marine Resources Committee
✓George Lepointe, Commissioner of Marine Resources