

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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N I N E T Y - T H I R D L E G I S L A T U R E

Legislative Document

No. 1292

H. P. 1620

House of Representatives, March 12, 1947

Transmitted by revisor of statutes pursuant to joint order

Referred to the Committee on Sea and Shore Fisheries, sent up for concurrence and ordered printed.

HARVEY R. PEASE, Clerk

Presented by Mr. Sleeper of Rockland

STATE OF MAINE

IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD NINETEEN HUNDRED
FORTY-SEVEN

RESOLVE, to Provide Funds for Clam Cleansing Research.

Clam cleansing facilities and research; to provide funds for. Resolved: That the commissioner of sea and shore fisheries be, and hereby is, authorized and directed to investigate and develop a suitable method for reclamation of clams from areas which are closed to digging because of contamination or pollution. After a suitable and practical method of reclamation is devised the commissioner will, when advisable, establish and maintain in conjunction with the state lobster rearing station, or if more suitable at some other location, a plant for the purification of clams taken from such areas; and be it further

Resolved: That the commissioner of agriculture and the commissioner of sea and shore fisheries shall cooperate in determining the areas from which clams shall be taken for purification. The commissioner of sea and shore fisheries with the advice of the commissioner of agriculture will set up a system of controlling the digging and transportation of clams from the closed areas. The commissioner shall regulate the times during which clams shall be taken from these areas and he shall regulate the quantities to be taken during such periods. He shall employ sufficient help to maintain and operate the plant on an efficient basis; and be it further

Resolved: That the state controller be, and hereby is, authorized to

advance from the unappropriated surplus of the general fund, the sum of \$25,000 to constitute a working capital fund for the equipping and operation of the plant if and when the commissioner of sea and shore fisheries with the advice and consent of the governor and council finds a suitable and practical method of reclamation. The authority for this advance shall expire June 30, 1949; and be it further

Resolved: That all fees derived from operation of the plant will be paid into a shellfish cleansing fund, upon which the commissioner shall draw for the operating costs of the cleansing program. Any excess over \$5,000 in the fund at the end of each fiscal year shall be repaid into the general fund until the original advance of \$25,000 is liquidated. Provided, however, that the operations of the program shall be so conducted that the advance will be liquidated on or before June 30, 1958. In the event the program is terminated, the assets shall be liquidated, all just debts discharged, and the balance returned to the general fund of the state.

STATEMENT OF FACTS

There are 58 areas of clam flats along the Maine coast which are closed to digging because of pollution. It is estimated that if these areas could be opened they would produce up to \$500,000 worth of clams annually. It is doubtful that digging can be permitted in any sizable number of the areas until the source of pollution, which is mostly municipal sewage, is eliminated and therefor the situation probably will not be rectified for many years.

There is now in successful operation a public owned and maintained clam cleansing plant in Massachusetts and funds have been provided for the erection of another.

The operation of a similar plant or plants in Maine would permit our diggers to reclaim the clams from many of the closed areas to an extent that would be controlled only by the capacity of the purification facilities.

This naturally would increase the prosperity of our coastal areas and prevent waste of a great natural resource.

The plant, if established, would be designed to be self supporting and to eventually refund the state for the capital investment, therefor it would not be an extra burden for the taxpayers.

The lobster rearing station operates but 3 months annually. The building and other facilities are ideal for a clam cleansing operation, and could be utilized for this purpose for 9 months each year without hampering the lobster rearing activities.