



# MAINE

## Lobstermen's Association, Inc.

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### **Testimony of Patrice McCarron Executive Director of the Maine Lobstermen's Association**

#### **In Opposition to LD 492 An Act To Expand Eligibility for Lobster and Crab Fishing Licenses for Veterans (Emergency)**

**Before the Committee on Marine Resources  
March 18, 2015**

Senator Baker, Representative Kumiega, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Marine Resources, my name is Patrice McCarron. I am the Director of the Maine Lobstermen's Association (MLA). MLA is Maine's oldest and largest fishing industry organization whose mission is to advocate for a sustainable lobster resource and the fishermen and communities that depend on it.

During the last legislative session, the Marine Resources Committee worked a bill to consider how veterans are treated with respect to maintaining access to Maine's limited entry fisheries. As a result of this work, the Legislature amended the law pertaining to those who serve in the military by expanding the window of opportunity for veterans to get their license back by four years, allowing them to serve up to 10-years rather than 6-years in the military.

The current statute allows veterans to receive a limited entry license, if the person:

1. held a license within a year of entering the service,
2. did not serve more than 10 years in the military,
3. was not dishonorably discharged and,
4. requests the license within a year of discharge from the service.

The MLA supported this change, and is very proud of this exemption that Maine has in place to honor the service of our veterans. Therefore, the MLA does not support the changes proposed in LD 492.

The MLA believes that reopening entry to the lobster fishery to any veteran who can prove landings simply goes too far. There is a lot of pent up demand from many to gain access to the lobster fishery, and veterans are one of the few groups who already have a strong program in place to ensure they don't lose their place in the fishery. And for issues of fairness, the MLA is opposed to any proposal which circumvents the Apprentice Program and/or the zone waiting list.

The MLA is grateful for the service that Maine's veterans provide, and feel strongly that their service is recognized and honored through the existing 10-year service exemption currently in statute. The MLA urges you to vote ought not to pass on LD 492.

Thank you for your consideration of MLA's comments.