



PO Box 27
13 ATLANTIC AVENUE
STONINGTON, ME 04681
PHONE: (207) 367-2708
FAX: (207) 367-2680
WWW.PENOBSCOTEAST.ORG

Securing a future for fishing communities

March 18, 2015

State of Maine Legislature
Joint Standing Committee on Marine Resources
Sen. Linda Baker, Senate Chair
Rep. Walter Kumiega, House Chair

BOARD OF DIRECTORS
DENNIS DAMON, CHAIR
JAMES CHESNEY, VICE-CHAIR
CHUCK LUCAS, TREASURER
CHARLIE OSBORN, SECRETARY

TED AMES
DWIGHT CARVER
SALLIE FINDLAY
TED HOSKINS
BRENT OLIVER
JANE OSBORNE
CECILY PINGREE
WALTER REED
ROBERT STENECK
THOMAS URMY
PAUL VENNO
JAMES WILSON

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
ROBIN ALDEN

DIRECTOR OF FINANCE
BRIAN CONKLIN-POWERS

SENIOR SCIENTIST
CARLA GUENTHER, PHD

POLICY DIRECTOR
KYLE MOLTON

FISHERIES & SEAFOOD ASSOCIATE
PATRICK SHEPARD

FISHERIES SCIENCE
& LEADERSHIP ADVISOR
MARISSA HAMMOND

ADMINISTRATIVE DIRECTOR
BOBBI BILLINGS

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT
BRENDA UNDERWOOD

DATABASE STEWARD
ANNE WEST

EMSP COORDINATOR
CHRISTINA FIFIELD

RE: Maine Marine Resource Licensing Bills

Dear Committee Members;

Thank you for the opportunity to share our thoughts about licensing. As you know, Penobscot East Resource Center is a Stonington based non-profit focused on sustaining fishing communities through sustainable fishing, forever.

Licensing is a fundamental issue for fishermen and fishing communities. Several years ago, Penobscot East identified licensing as the most significant single issue that will determine the sustainability of Maine's vibrant coastal fishing businesses. At that time, we initiated two processes: 1) a major statewide outreach process during which we spoke with more than 200 Maine fishermen in a series of coastwide meetings, asking about their values, concerns and vision for the future of fishing in Maine; and 2) seeking advice and suggestions from both the east and west coasts of US and Canada.

We have posed the question this way: how can Maine licensing support the continuation of sustainable community-scale fishing in a changing ocean?

One insight we gained from other regions is that Maine is almost unique in North America in having a vibrant community fishery. Our state has a real opportunity to enhance and strengthen this vital piece of the coastal economy for the long term through deliberate licensing reform.

To date, most licensing proposals are aimed at small pieces of larger issues within the current state licensing system. It is our opinion that this moment in Maine fishing history requires a well thought out and comprehensive process, with fishermen and public

input, to find long term solutions to meet these lofty challenges. We therefore encourage the Committee and the Department to pursue a forward looking approach that addresses the core issues rather than a “band aid” approach.

Our work to date has surfaced one fundamental idea that is critical to this conversation: linking licensing and access to stewardship is a critical path to supporting fishing communities and ensuring ecosystem sustainability. Key elements of this approach are owner-operator fisheries and avoiding transferability, both of which go a long way toward fostering stewardship. Without maintaining healthy resources and preserving opportunities for current and future community-based fishermen to pursue multiple fisheries, even the best laid licensing plans could be an exercise in futility.

We look forward to working closely with members of the Committee, the Department of Marine Resources, and most importantly with fishermen and in their communities to find viable, comprehensive solutions to our state’s most important licensing challenges. The future of our fisheries and our fishermen depends on it.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Kyle J. Molton".

Kyle J. Molton
Policy Director
Penobscot East Resource Center