



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

2 STATE HOUSE STATION
AUGUSTA, MAINE 04333-0002

(207) 287-1400

TTY: (207) 287-4469

Robert W. Alley, Sr.

P. O. Box 263

Beals, ME 04611

Cell: (207) 263-4442

Robert.Alley@legislature.maine.gov

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Testimony of Representative Robert Alley introducing LD 908, "An Act to Promote the Sustainability in the Scallop Fishing Industry"

Good Afternoon Senator Baker, Representative Kumiega and members of the Marine Resources Committee. I am Representative Robert Alley, and I represent eleven communities in Washington County. I am here today to introduce LD 908, "An Act to Promote the Sustainability in the Scallop Fishing Industry."

This bill contains three parts:

1. Limit the daily catch
2. Allow some limited entry
3. Reduce the drag size

I would like to share my beliefs and reasons for submitting this legislation.

First of all, if you talk to the down east scallop draggers, most will tell you that they would like to see a 90lb limit in our area. They may also tell you that this is the only license they have. But, being a Downeaster and growing up there – I know that a lot of them go sand and blood worming as well. Some also go as stern men on lobster boats to get by until scallop season.

Secondly, there is something or someone we are forgetting and that is our young people graduating from high school in Down East Maine. They need to be a part of this equation. We need to make this fishery a sustainable one and it needs to be opened up to include them in communities up and down the coast.

I realize that some don't think that anyone else should be let into scalloping. We have a tough decision to make! Somewhere along the line, the current scallop fishermen got a break before the licensing for this fishery was closed.

If we start conserving now by lowering the catch limit, and keep a healthy stock on bottom, there should be workable areas about anywhere. With the stock rebound of the last few years, people are making money and I want this to continue for the current fishermen and the ones to come.

Reducing the drag size to 5 ½ feet inside of the outer islands N S E W and into rivers and bays would preserve the bottom and therefore, the scallops living there. Some of the drag equipment being used is almost the equivalent of towing a full-sized car – sideways - behind you.

I thank you for your attention and hope that you will consider this bill and recommend it ought to pass.