

Committee on Marine Resources  
c/o Legislative Information  
100 State House Station  
Augusta, ME 04333

March 24, 2015

Dear Senator Baker, Representative Kumiega and members of the Marine Resources Committee:

As members of the Maine state waters scallop fishery we **write today to oppose LD 908—*An Act to Promote Sustainability in the Scallop Fishery.***

In 2007, Maine's scallop fishery was controlled primarily through a season and a drag size restriction. Under these regulations fishermen landed roughly 177,000lbs of scallops with a value of roughly \$1.4million. In the past eight years, the fishery has undergone huge regulatory changes led by the Department of Marine Resources (DMR) designed to bring about the recovery of the resource and the fishery. These regulations were not always embraced by fishermen, but in 2014, over 584,000lbs of scallops were landed with a value of roughly \$7.4 million, leaving little to be debated about the success of the hard work and sacrifices that have been made to rebuild this fishery.

The majority of recent management changes were enacted through the rulemaking process after numerous meetings all along the coast. Holding meetings in each of Maine's scallop fishing areas is critical to the development of effective regulations because of the diversity in Maine's scallop fishery. The scallop resource in Cobscook Bay is very different from the resource in Casco Bay, and the fishermen who participate in the fishery must tailor their fishing and businesses practices to best fit the many unique areas where scallops are harvested.

The success of recent management has led to an increase in scallops along the coast, and that increase, along with the decline of other resources including shrimp and groundfish, has brought fishermen who have been holding on to their licenses but not using them back to the fishery. The number of active scallop fishermen has almost tripled in the past four years. As participants increase, effort has been reduced even further in order to keep growing the resource. The 200-pound limit that was enacted in 2008 has already been reduced to 135 pounds, and many traditional fishing areas have been closed early. These changes impact different fishermen in different ways, and each change has been made in close consultation with the fishermen who rely on this resource. It is in this manner that we hope any new regulations on the fishery are developed and put in place.

While we recognize the good intentions of this bill in allowing new entrants into a fishery when many in our industry are struggling, we do not believe this is the proper setting for that discussion. That discussion must take place in close consultation with the industry in order to strike an appropriate balance between the needs of the resource and the needs of current and prospective fishermen. Developing any new regulations or a plan to allow new entrants into the fishery should be done through a process developed by the DMR, with an emphasis placed on rebuilding the resource and building strong businesses within that industry.

The undersigned fishermen oppose LD 908 for the reasons listed above:

Mike Brown, Brunswick, F/V Miss Halie  
Alex Todd, Freeport, F/V Jacob & Joshua  
Farrell Beal, Beals, F/V Navigator  
John Polk, Bucks Harbor, F.V Noreaster  
David Smith, Machiasport, Sternman on F/V Noreaster  
Jeremy Ames, Yarmouth, F/V Foxy Lady  
Ben Crocker Jr., Roque Bluffs, F/V Clean Sweep  
Eric Waterman, South Thomaston, F/V Crown Royal  
Howard Calder, Dennysville, F/V Anger Management  
John W. Chipman, Milbridge, F/V Catherine E  
Josh Kelley, Beals, F/V Overtimer  
Stephen Calder, Perry, F/V Doucet Lady  
Charles Smith, Jonesport, F/V Laurie Ann 2  
Derek Jones, Stonington, F/V Heather Marie  
Frank Jones, Stonington, F/V Sundown  
Russell Parmenter, Yarmouth, F/V Patricia Ann  
John D. Wood, Machiasport, F/V Tana Lee  
Josh Polk, Machiasport, F/V Amber Ann  
Craig Stewart, Long Island, F/V Carl & Co  
Joel Harper, Southwest Harbor, F/V Night Prowler