

Senator Baker, Representative Kumiega and members of The Joint Standing Committee on Marine Resources. My name is Jim Wotton I'm a seventh generation commercial fisherman from Friendship and I've been in the scallop fishery for 26 years. I'm here in opposition to LD 908.

This bill as it is written does nothing to "promote sustainability in the scallop fishery" in fact it is my opinion it would have the opposite effect.

The scallop resource has made some good progress towards recovery in much of the state due to proactive management in the form of closures, rotational management, reduced days at sea, limited entry and an increase in ring size to 4 inches. However parts of the state have seen mixed results, in my area of Zone 1 we saw the gains we sacrificed three years for erased in a few days by the reactivation of latent licenses. Amending limited entry as proposed will continue to push the resource in the wrong direction, especially in zone 1.

This bill if enacted will severely limit my ability to be profitable and sustain my business. For many in this fishery, myself included, 90 pounds daily is not enough to run a profitable business especially in the western part of the State. I have one of the larger, newer, faster boats in the fleet and use an eight foot dredge. I run a three man crew including myself. We routinely travel over an hour by boat to reach prime fishing grounds. 90 pounds will either force me out of the fishery or force me to reduce expenses by not traveling to prime fishing and staying close to home where the stocks are not as healthy, doing further damage to a reduced stock. And then the bill proposes a five foot six inch dredge size limit, a decrease of about one third from my current size. I will have to spend thousands for a new dredge. This will increase my fishing time by one third and putting my expenses back up and doing further damage to small scallops.

Daily limits and dredge limits in the western part of the state will do little to protect or improve the resource, they will only effect the ones at the top of their game, It will be business as usual for most.

The Maine scallop fishery covers the entire coast and is comprised of a diverse group of fishermen who have different needs and views based on the resource in their area. We need to take all into consideration when managing the fishery. Because of this diversity it is my belief that regulations such as dredge size and daily limits should fall under rulemaking where they can be adjusted as needed to benefit the fishery and the resource.

Thank you for your consideration, if you have any questions I would be glad to try to answer them.