

April 1, 2015

To the Marine Resources Committee,

My name is Rob Bauer and I am the Sales Manager at Beals Lobster Pier in SW Harbor. We are one of the few docks on the Rock Bound Coast of Maine that buys everything that fisherman can catch in the waters off our coast. We land Lobsters, Crabs, Halibut, Shrimp, Tuna , Swordfish and Scallops. Though not a large dock in terms of volume, we are an important part of the vanishing working waterfront on the Coast of Maine, and everyday we face new challenges that chip away at our very existence. Just this year we were forced to find a new insurance carrier because our old carrier stopped covering any business's on the water.

We have around 30 active fishermen who land over 1 million pounds of lobster a year, as well as all the other species I have mentioned. We buy scallops from 4-8 boats in the Mt. Desert region and sometimes send a truck to Cobscook Bay to buy Scallops there. We sell our scallops to restaurants in Bar Harbor, wholesale dealers in Boston and at our own restaurant on the Pier. When we send Scallops to people out of the state of Maine, we put them on a truck that will take them to Boston or other places. The freight charges for this activity are not small and must be offset by volume. If our current fishermen were restricted to catching just 90lbs, we would face higher shipping costs for our scallops due to the lower volume being shipped. It is rare for all our fishermen to land all their daily quota on the same day, so it is very important that some boats come in with the full 120lbs that they can now catch. Without this volume, our shipping costs would be much higher.

The state of Maine and the Federal government have been slowly increasing the cost of doing business to Seafood dealers in the State of Maine. Through increased License Fee's and Regulatory Compliance, higher Insurance, etc., our costs to keep the doors open continue to climb while our ability to make a buck is somewhat fixed. This is especially true for the smaller docks like Beals. We need product to sell to keep the wheels rolling. This bill takes away product from us.

The scallop resource is owned by the people of the state of Maine and as such the state is the caretaker of that resource. Unfortunately, it is not the caretaker of fishermen. The provision of allowing former license holders to reenter the fishery will put more drags in the water and put more pressure on the resource, not less. It sometimes does not seem fair that licenses that were not renewed in the past, cannot be renewed now. The problem has arisen partly because the state has of the concept that fishing is a right, such as the right to bear arms. What is needed now is for the state to promote and institute the concept that fishing is not a right, but a privilege, granted to those who wish to do it, and with privilege comes responsibility to those who ultimately control the resource, the people of the state of Maine. On a personal note, I did not renew my Elver license in 2010. I would love to renew it but I understand that the allocation of the commons is one of the most difficult duties that is undertaken by the state. I do not expect to get a second chance and am fine with that.

Rob Bauer

Sales Manager

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