



# HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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## Testimony of Representative Robert Alley introducing LD 896, "An Act to Improve Lobster Licensing" - April 6, 2015

Good Afternoon Senator Baker, Representative Kumiega and fellow members of the Marine Resources Committee. I am Representative Robert Alley, and I represent the towns of Jonesport, Beals, Addison, Harrington, Cherryfield, Milbridge, Columbia, Columbia Falls, Centerville Plantation, Marshfield, Whitneyville and Jonesboro in Washington County. I am here today to introduce LD ~~896~~, "An Act to Improve Lobster Licensing."

I have received a lot of great feedback on this bill over the last several weeks – feedback from friends, from family, and members of the lobster fishing industry from the area I represent. I am also grateful to the Department of marine resources for providing this committee with a lot of great information on licensing in the various fisheries. This bill was submitted before that information was presented.

Because of all this new information, I would like to propose the following.

First, that when the committee goes into work session on this bill, they strip the language after the enacting clause, and turn this bill into a resolve directing DMR to work with the various fishing industries and stakeholder groups to develop a comprehensive approach to licensing.

We have talked this over many times over the past few weeks, and whether we are talking about scallops, lobsters, elvers or any other fishery, we need to be 100% sure that we are addressing the needs of the industry, those waiting to get in, and those young people who may want to have a chance to fish. This is not just about today, but about the next generation of fishermen. I have heard that loud and clear from the committee, the department and members of the audience. I think we could save a lot of time by dealing with it head on.

If that solution is not acceptable, I would ask that the committee remove the language from the current bill and carry it over until the Department has a chance to iron things out while legislators like us are home this summer.

Either way, we need to deal with these issues and we need to deal with them in all fisheries. And we can't do it by taking a one-size fits all approach.

Looking back, this probably should have been a concept bill in the first place. I have no problem admitting when I've made a mistake. I think all of us here – especially the fishermen – have made mistakes as we try to figure out what we're supposed to be doing. That said, it is what it is, and we need to move on.

We all want to do the right thing here. Every one of us – Democrat, Republican or independent; lobster fisherman, elver fisherman or scallop dragger, we all want that and I think it's time we do so.

With that, and with everyone's agreement on the committee and in the audience, I respectfully request that we invite those in the audience who have come to testify here today to weigh in on the issues concerning licensing in our fisheries and how to improve it.

Thank you very much for your consideration.