



MAINE

Lobstermen's Association, Inc.

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Testimony of Patrice McCarron
Director of the Maine Lobstermen's Association

In Opposition to
LD 1016 An Act To Allow Retired Marine Patrol Officers to Obtain up to 2 Marine Fisheries Licenses
Before the Committee on Marine Resources
April 6, 2015

Senator Baker, Representative Kumiega, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Marine Resources, my name is Patrice McCarron. I am the executive director of the Maine Lobstermen's Association (MLA), an industry-based trade organization whose mission is to advocate for a sustainable lobster resource and the fishermen and communities that depend on it.

The MLA does not support LD 1016. As we articulated in our testimony on LD 896, LD 1016 would create a loophole to the lobster industry's limited entry program in order to allow retired Marine Patrol Officers to obtain a lobster license, as well as another limited entry fishing license.

There is currently an avenue for anyone to enter the lobster fishery, and it is the same standard for all. The MLA does not support any proposals that would keep the existing Apprentice and Limited Entry programs in place, while creating a loophole for others to get in. There are many people on the waiting lists in 6 of the 7 lobster zones who have logged their time and are waiting for their chance to get a lobster license.

As we stated in our previous testimony, the MLA has a lot of respect for those who serve in Maine's Marine Patrol, but what makes them more deserving of a lobster license than say, the Commissioner, or someone who is currently on the waiting list?

The MLA sees the Apprentice Program as required professional training to enter the lobster fishery, similar to those required in other skilled trades. The fact that an individual brings a high level of knowledge or skill to the table does not negate the need for the Apprenticeship. Gaining an understanding of the local culture and operational aspects of the fishery has always been an equally important part of the apprentice's experience. There are many former lobstermen and other seasoned mariners who have had to complete the Apprentice Program in order to get into (or back into) the lobster fishery. There is not currently any mechanism to gain credit for previous fishing experience or other work on the water. And so far, this has worked. And due to the success of the lobster fishery, there is ample opportunity for those willing to work hard to be employed as a sternman so that they can log the necessary hours to complete the Apprentice Program, and importantly, learn about and assimilate into the local fishery.

The MLA is adamantly opposed to creating loopholes for one group to have an advantage to access the lobster fishery or any limited entry fishery over others, and we urge you to not to support LD 1016.