**An Act To Create a Legal Defense Fund for the Maine Lobster Industry**

**Be it enacted by the People of the State of Maine as follows:**

**CONCEPT DRAFT**

**SUMMARY**

This bill is a concept draft pursuant to Joint Rule 208.

This bill proposes to establish the Legal Defense Fund for the Maine Lobster Industry and a commission to administer the fund. The commission would have 7 members, including 4 legislators who serve on the joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over marine resources matters, the Senate chair and House chair and the ranking member of the committee from the Senate who is a member of the party with the 2nd highest number of seats in the Senate and the ranking member of the committee from the House who is a member of the party with the 2nd highest number of seats in the House. Also serving on the commission would be 3 licensed members of the lobster industry, one each appointed by the Governor, President of the Senate and Speaker of the House. The commission would be charged with reviewing current and proposed laws, rules and regulations, both federal and state, concerning the lobster industry, determining the best course of action, including a response involving the legal system, and using the money in the Legal Defense Fund for the Maine Lobster Industry to carry out that course of action as appropriate. The Legal Defense Fund for the Maine Lobster Industry would be funded by depositing 20¢ from the sale of each trap tag into the fund and by depositing 20% of the license surcharge for the State's lobster marketing collaborative into the fund. The laws governing the commission and the fund would be repealed in 2032.