

STATE OF MAINE

IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD
TWO THOUSAND TWENTY-FIVE

H.P. 318 - L.D. 489

**An Act to Provide for a Vessel Breakdown License Exception for
Commercial Halibut Fishing License Holders**

Emergency preamble. Whereas, acts and resolves of the Legislature do not become effective until 90 days after adjournment unless enacted as emergencies; and

Whereas, this legislation must take effect before May 18, 2025, the beginning of the 2025 commercial halibut fishing season; and

Whereas, in the judgment of the Legislature, these facts create an emergency within the meaning of the Constitution of Maine and require the following legislation as immediately necessary for the preservation of the public peace, health and safety; now, therefore,

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

Sec. 1. 12 MRSA §6506, sub-§2, as enacted by PL 2021, c. 627, §5, is amended to read:

2. Licensed activity; commercial license. The holder of a commercial halibut fishing license issued under subsection 1 may fish for, take, possess, ship, transport or sell halibut that the holder has taken using the vessel named on the license. Crew members aboard a license holder's vessel may fish for, take, possess, ship or transport halibut only if the license provides for crew members.

Sec. 2. 12 MRSA §6506, sub-§2-A is enacted to read:

2-A. Exception to using vessel named on license holder's license for commercial license holders. Notwithstanding subsection 2, the commissioner may temporarily authorize a holder of a commercial halibut fishing license to use a vessel other than the vessel named on that license holder's license to fish for, take, possess, ship or transport halibut if the license holder documents to the commissioner that the vessel named on that license holder's license has become temporarily inoperable because of an accident or a mechanical failure and requests in writing to the commissioner that the commissioner authorize the use of another vessel to fish for or take halibut. The commissioner's authorization may require the license holder to fish for, take, possess and land halibut separately from any halibut taken under another license listing the same vessel to ensure

that harvest limits are not exceeded. An authorization granted by the commissioner to a license holder due to an accident or a mechanical failure may not exceed 2 weeks. The commissioner may authorize one 2-week extension per license holder during the commercial halibut fishing season. An authorization under this subsection may not be granted by the commissioner in 2 consecutive years.

Emergency clause. In view of the emergency cited in the preamble, this legislation takes effect when approved.