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An Act To Permit the Landing of Dragged Crabs as Bycatch

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

Whereas, given the serious recent restrictions on groundfishing, this legislation may provide some relief to the troubled industry; 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 §6421, sub-§4, as amended by PL 1991, c. 591, Pt. T, §1, is repealed and the following enacted in its place:

4. Exception. A license is not required for a person:

A. To take or catch crabs with bare hands or hook and line; or

B. Who is issued a commercial fishing license under section 6501 to take, possess and sell crabs that have been taken as bycatch while using an otter trawl within the exclusive economic zone as shown on the most recently published Federal Government nautical chart. Crabs taken by otter trawl within the territorial waters must be liberated alive immediately.

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

SUMMARY

This bill allows a person who is issued a commercial fishing license under the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 12, section 6501 to take, possess and sell crabs that have been taken as bycatch while using an otter trawl within the exclusive economic zone as shown on the most recently published Federal Government nautical chart.