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An Act To Improve the Enforcement of Maine's Lobster Laws

CONCEPT DRAFT SUMMARY

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

This bill would enact measures to improve the enforcement of the State's lobster conservation laws and ensure the long-term sustainability of the lobster resource. These measures may include:

1. Establishing minimum penalties such as license suspension to deter violations, including scrubbing lobsters, fishing over the trap limit, fishing sunken trawls or untagged gear and molesting lobster traps;

2. Establishing minimum monetary fines to deter violations, including keeping short, over-sized, v-notched or egg-bearing female lobsters, and higher minimum penalties for repeat offenders;

3. Allowing the Commissioner of Marine Resources to revoke the marine resources licenses of those found guilty of sinking, burning or otherwise destroying another fisherman's vessel;

4. Requiring lobster fishing license holders found guilty of violating marine conservation laws to pay restitution equal to the cost incurred by the State to conduct the investigation for offenses, including scrubbing lobsters; fishing over the trap limit; fishing sunken trawls or untagged gear; keeping short, over-sized, v-notched or egg-bearing female lobsters; molesting lobster traps; or sinking, burning or otherwise destroying another fisherman's vessel; and

5. Requiring a lobster fishing license holder convicted of a marine resources violation resulting in a license suspension who reenters the lobster fishery to reenter as a new entrant limited to 300 traps and to have a vessel monitoring system aboard the license holder's vessel. Such a lobster fishing license holder would be allowed to build up the number of traps at a rate of 100 traps per year up to the lobster zone limit.