



Maine Lobstering Union

Local 207



150 Bar Harbor Rd., Trenton, ME 04605

Senator Reny, Representative Hepler, Honorable Members of the Marine Resource Committee:

My name is Virginia Olsen, I am a commercial lobsterman from Stonington and the Director of the Maine Lobstering Union.

The MLU is testifying *in favor* of LD 710 An Act to Fund the Lobster Legal Defense Fund. Maine is the Lobster capital of the world, if we lose our iconic industry all of Maine will suffer. Lobster draws tourism dollars to our state. It is what drives tourists past beautiful quiet, Vermont, the breathtaking mountains of New Hampshire to the most eastern point of the United States to Maine. This committee approved these funds in the 130th legislature and we are asking they be renewed as this fight is going to be a long one. We are not asking for General Fund dollars, these funds are paid by fishermen through their licensing fees. A portion of licensing fees go to the Marketing Collaborative, please note this bill asks for a portion of those fees as it did before, not all of them. I would also like to highlight that the collaborative did some great work last year creating content that not only promoted Maine Lobster, but it also more importantly supported the industry and the good work fishermen do as stewards of their resource on the water every day. We are sure it was tough working with less funds, I think in some capacity or another we are all doing that. We feel this balance of funding both the collaborative, and the funding needed to defend our industry to keep us fishing is vital for Maine. I'm sure you all have heard "A rising tide lifts all boats" by John F Kennedy, it certainly seems fitting today. A healthy vibrant fishery is a healthy vibrant Maine economy. Please join us and support LD 710 An Act to Fund the Lobster Legal Defense Fund.

Thank you,

Virginia Olsen
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