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To Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Marine Resources

Re: L.D. 553, “An Act to Assert State Sovereignty over Ocean Waters and Marine Resources up to 12 Nautical Miles off the State's Coast”.

March 6, 2025

Sen. Tepler, Rep. Hepler, and members of the Marine Resources Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony before you today. I’m Penny Morrell, taxpayer and citizen of the Town of Belgrade, Maine.

I support L.D. 553, “An Act to Assert State Sovereignty over Ocean Waters and Marine Resources up to 12 Nautical Miles off the State's Coast”.

Our lobster industry has been under attack from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) for some time now. It’s disheartening to learn that lobstermen have had to continue to make changes in their equipment to comply with rules and ordinances by an unelected government bureaucracy. From the size of lobsters they can catch, to size of holes in traps, to bait catching regulations, and the need for million-dollar boats just to go out where the lobsters are at certain times of the year, it’s very unfair and unnecessary.

Everything from save the whales, while white whales don’t even come into Maine waters, to windmills that inhibit the beauty, and harm whales because of the noise, NOAA has tampered with our lobster industry without proper knowledge for far too long.

Then there’s the shrimp fishery. Maine shrimp are some of the sweetest delicious delicacies we have, yet it has been shut down. Canadian fishermen and those of other countries still fish our waters for them.

The Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) is very adamant about protecting the beauty of our natural resources, our coast being one of the most favorable. Yet, that bureaucracy is willing to allow windmills for “clean energy” without repercussions. Why?

This bill is necessary and a welcomed act for our Maine marine resources, and I urge this committee to vote LD 553, “ought to pass.” Thank you.