

To: Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Marine Resources
From: Emily Coffin, Policy Coordinator
Date: March 6th, 2025

Re: LD 489: An Act to Provide For a Vessel Breakdown License Exception for Commercial Halibut Fishing License Holders (Emergency)



Dear Honorable Senator Tepler, Representative Hepler, and distinguished members of the Joint Committee on Marine Resources:

The Maine Coast Fishermen's Association (MCFA) is an industry-based nonprofit dedicated to restoring the fisheries of the Gulf of Maine and preserving Maine's iconic fishing communities for future generations. Founded by Maine fishermen to provide a voice in fisheries management, MCFA represents many halibut fishermen who rely on the species to bolster their business and diversify their fishing practice.

MCFA is in support of LD 489 and its effort to provide fishermen the flexibility to continue fishing if their primary vessel is temporarily out of commission. The halibut season is very short (less than a month) and if a fisherman who relies on halibut suffers an unlucky mechanical issue or worse, they would suffer a loss of vital income. A 2-week exception to the standard regulation tying fishermen to their vessel would allow for much needed flexibility in the time of mishap. Those who work and live around boats know all too well that engine troubles and other misfortunes happen to everyone. For the Marine Resource Committee to allow the opportunity for a fisherman to request a reprieve from the rule to participate in a short fishing window would surely benefit Maine's fishermen and the economy writ large.

Thank you,
Emily Coffin, Policy Coordinator
Maine Coast Fishermen's Association

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Emily Coffin".