

Dear Honorable Members of the Marine Resources Committee:

I am writing to support LD 1561: Resolve, Regarding the Percentage of a Lobster and Crab Fishing Licensee's Lobster Traps That May Be Fished in a Lobster Management Zone Listed on the License as a Secondary Zone.

This issue is important to those who fish on the western side of Zone E in the traditional waters surrounding Small Point. Over the years, we have seen a steady trend of more and more vessels fishing in zone E, creating crowding issues and uncertainty over the distribution of landings and the effect upon the communities dependent upon the lobster resource.

From 2016 to 2024 Zone E saw 21 additional fishermen from Zone F fishing Zone E waters, resulting in the potential addition of 6,174 traps being fished in these waters. This creates the effect of transferring landings from one community to another, adversely impacting vessels, captains, crew, buying stations and the extended community. It is also a trend that appears to have no end in sight.

Zone E had voted early on in the zone process to a lower 600 trap limit due to density issues within Zone E. Zone E is one if not the smallest zone by area. The addition of all this new effort has negated and rolled back any benefits from Zone E voluntarily lowering its trap limit.

The amount of gear going from one zone to another also raises issues with the limited entry system. Each zone creates its ratios it deems fit for balancing the amount of effort to let into that particular zone. If another zone is allowed to flood into another, it is essentially a back door around the exit to entry ratios.

This is one step we hope in a process to provide some stability and relief long term for those negatively impacted by this effort redistribution.

Lawrence Pye  
Small Point Harbor