

Matt Gilley
Harpwell
LD 1319

Good afternoon

Good afternoon senator Tepler and Representative Hepler and members of the marine resource committee. My name is Matt Gilley and I am a zone F council representative and a Cundys harbor lobster boat captain. I'm writing to you today in extremely strong opposition to Id 1319 An Act to Amend the Law Regarding the Suspension of Licenses Issued by the Department of Marine Resources for Failure to Comply with Reporting Requirements. Reporting for lobster harvesting began a couple of years ago at the state level and became a federal requirement last year. Upon implementation last year by the federal government there were numerous problems with the application we had to use to report. I can only speak for myself I filed 122 reports last year. I had issues on 48 different occasions. I spent countless weeks on the phone with DMR trying to work through the problems. They were always extremely helpful. Most of the issues I had came from issues with the application we were using or a problem or at the federal level with the server. None of my issues were caused by myself and the state can attest to this. Most recently in March when I went to renew my federal permit I was found out of compliance. Upon investigation I was told I was missing over 300 reports over the last couple years. I had purchased my federal permit several years prior and the system wanted me to file my reports (which had already been filed once) as well as the reports for the person I had purchased my permit from. It took several weeks to solve this issue. I have had issues with even connecting to the server to submit the reports. Over 100 of the reports I submitted I had to do multiple times because of server errors. I still have errors on every report due to exporting data issues. Well over a third of the time I have tried to submit reports I have had issues that I have had to call the state spend hours of my own time in order to remain in compliance. During this time I have been unable to renew licenses and spent countless hours working through the issues on my own losing time fishing and with family. This has cost me significant financial, emotional, and mental anguish. I have expressed my dissatisfaction each time with NOAA and DMR yet the problems have continued to happen. There were multiple times I was unable to report in the 24 hour time frame because of an error on the governments end. DMR has acknowledged their frustrations with the Feds inability to fix the issues. To now move to suspend a harvesters license when they haven't reported in 24 hours is unacceptable. Will people lose their jobs if the server or application doesn't work for 24 hours? If we can't file a report because of a problem on their end why are we the only ones being penalized? I barely have the time to spend on the phone with DMR and to now have to request a hearing to keep my license is not realistic. I would have had to have had 37 hearings last year based on the way the law is written. To attempt to penalize harvesters for not complying with something that isn't compilable with in the first place just seems like a way to eliminate licenses. How about fixing the system we have to use before threatening to take our livelihoods. We've only been asking this since its inception. I urge you to vote ought not to pass on this very troublesome bill.