

21 January 2026

The Honorable Joseph Baldacci, Senate Chair
The Honorable Suzanne Salisbury, House Chair
Committee on State and Local Government
Cross Building, Room 214
Augusta, ME. 04333

Senator Baldacci, Representative Salisbury, Honorable members of the Joint Committee on State and Local Government:

My name is Liz Michaud, a proud native of Downeast Maine, a University of Maine alumna, and someone deeply bonded to the commercial fishing community. I rise today in support of LD2069. Representative Tuell has already shared some of our family's story, so I'll keep it brief. I want to extend my heartfelt gratitude to Representative Tuell for his unwavering support and dedication to this cause. Ironically, it was exactly 30 months ago today, my 18-year-old nephew tragically did not return from a day of lobster fishing. This devastating loss has left an indelible mark on our family, friends, and community. As Will mentioned, this tragedy inspired me to establish Green and White Hope Inc in April 2025. This Maine-based non-profit is dedicated to enhancing commercial fishing safety through education, technological advancements, and improved rescue and recovery efforts. However, that is not today's focus, my focus is to share why making July 21 an annual day for the state to honor and remember ALL of our lost commercial fishermen with **"Maine Commercial Fishing Remembrance Day" is right, just, and earned.**

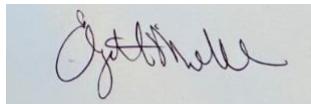
In 1880, the U.S. Fish Commission declared "Maine enjoys many advantages not possessed by other states for the prosecution of the fisheries." Maine has been a leader in the seafood economy since the 1800's. Today, the Maine fishermen continue to be the backbone of the seafood economy, contributing over 80% to the U.S. domestic lobster market (U.S. International Trade Commission, USITC, 2022) and employing over 33,000 marine living resource persons (Sea Maine Roadmap, 2019). This work is 40 times more fatal than the average U.S. job (NIOSH, Commercial Fishing Safety in the United States, 2025). Commercial fishing accidents happen and when they do, they generate significant publicity and calls to action, but this fades over time. The committee's support of **"Maine Commercial Fishing Remembrance Day"** and hopefully the ultimate passing of this bill, will send a **lasting message of appreciation, respect, and support** to commercial fishermen, their families, and this heritage industry.

Last year, at my request, Governor Mills declared July 21, 2025, as the 1st **"Maine Commercial Fishing Remembrance Day."** The request for this day was motivated by a need to honor the profound losses of four commercial fishermen Downeast in early 2025, as well as the many others who have perished across Maine, including Tylar, so their sacrifice is not forgotten. It also was meant to serve as a powerful call to action, urging us to visibly renew our commitment to enhancing safety and recovery efforts, with the **ultimate goal of ensuring that every fisherman returns home.**

The Governors' declaration was honored on that day with a heartfelt ceremony at the Lost Fishermen's Memorial in Lubec, ME. Nearly 200 attendees gathered, including families who had lost loved ones, legislators, dignitaries from the Department of Marine Resources, partner organizations in fishing safety, and members of the fishing community. For the first time, families who had experienced losses over the past two years came together, providing an incredible opportunity to support one another and keeping the memories of our loved ones alive. The event also showcased advancements in safety and wellness, sparking interest, hope, and momentum among attendees that future losses can be reduced.

As we look to the future, I envision many Maine working waterfronts recognizing this day, creating a unified front to honor our lost fishermen with remembrance and hope. I respectfully ask for your support of LD2069, making July 21st annually "**Maine Commercial Fishing Remembrance Day**".

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Liz Michaud".

Liz Michaud
Founder/President
Green and White Hope, Inc