



New England Fishermen's Stewardship Association

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Senator Rotundo, Representative Sachs, and other members of the Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs, my name is Dustin Delano and I am the Chief Operating Officer of the New England Fishermen's Stewardship Association (NEFSA) and also a commercial lobster fisherman of over 20 years. NEFSA is comprised of over 750 members and fully supports LD 2225, "An Act to Provide Funding to Rebuild Infrastructure Affected by Extreme Inland and Coastal Weather Events."

NEFSA is a newly formed fishing advocacy platform, bringing together all types of fishermen across New England who share common ground in the interest of fisheries preservation. Our mission statement reads, "NEFSA is an alliance of the wild harvesters of the waters off of New England, dedicated to educating the public about how best to manage our seafood resources through sound science and best practices at conservation used by fishermen, with a view toward economic well-being, ecosystem sustainability and US food security."

Along the coast of Maine, fishing is the back bone of our communities and a major driver of our local economies. As a result of the January storms, many people completely lost their access to the working waterfront as wharves, docks, floats, etc were swept away by the mix of some of the highest tides of the year, storm surge, monstrous seas, and heavy winds. It is estimated that the heavy damage will cost hundreds of millions to repair when all types of infrastructure are added together.

The working waterfront supports many other businesses other than those related to fishing. Tourism for example will also take a heavy hit if adequate and timely repairs are not made. People flock to Maine from all over the world in the summer time to get a taste of what Maine has to offer, particularly along the coast. Tourists frequent local restaurants, docks, and stores which along with fishing—really sets the scale and dependence on an adequate, functional working water front.

One of the reasons it is crucial for LD 2225 to pass is that it will provide relief to many who were unable to insure their property or simply could not afford the inflated rates of insurance. As a commercial fisherman, a major fear of mine is that folks won't be able to afford to fix or rebuild, causing them to put their properties up for sale. Access to the working waterfront is already extremely limited in many areas, Maine simply can not afford the risk of losing more valuable infrastructure to out of state buyers.

NEFSA encourages you to support LD 2225 to help rebuild the coastal infrastructure and ensure future resiliency in doing so.

Thank you,

Dustin W. Delano
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