

**TESTIMONY OF
Patrick Keliher
Department of Marine Resources**

**The Department of Marine Resources (DMR) is testifying
In Opposition to**

**LD 336 An Act to Change the Waiting List System for Commercial Lobster and Crab Fishing Licenses
Before the Committee on Marine Resources
Sponsored by Representative Bagshaw
Date of Hearing: March 6, 2025**

Senator Tepler, Representative Hepler, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Marine Resources, my name is Patrick Keliher, I am the Commissioner of the Department of Marine Resources, and I am testifying on behalf of the Department in opposition to LD 336.

The lobster zone councils were created 30 years ago, to facilitate a co-management approach for local and regional management of Maine's lobster fishery. At the time of their creation, the Zones were vested by the Legislature with three items that they may propose to the commissioner to place limitations on the lobster and crab fishing license holders that fish in that zone. These were: the number of lobster traps fished, the number of lobster traps allowed on a trawl, and the time of day when lobster fishing may occur. These authorities were subsequently expanded when lobster became a limited entry fishery in 1999 to allow Zone Councils to also recommend the exit ratio for their Zone and, subsequent to that, whether that annual calculation should be based on licenses not renewed or trap tags retired. An exit ratio is defined by the amount of effort that must leave the Zone before a new license is created.

LD 336 would eliminate one of the authorities that a zone holds, eliminating their ability to recommend a ratio to the Department, leaving only one possible ratio for all Zones, which would be 1:1. For reference, the existing ratios that have been recommended by each Zone and adopted through the regulatory process are currently as follows:

Zone A: One license awarded for every three licenses retired (3:1)
Zone B: One license awarded for every three licenses retired (3:1)
Zone C: One license awarded for every license retired (1:1)
Zone D: One license awarded for every 4000 tags retired (5:1 with tags)
Zone E: One license awarded for every five licenses retired (5:1)
Zone F: One license awarded for every 4000 tags retired (5:1 with tags)
Zone G: One license awarded for every 4000 tags retired (5:1 with tags)

It is worth noting that in recent years there has been a trend toward more lobster licenses being retired, which has resulted in larger numbers of licenses being issued in nearly every Zone. Please see the table below for the supporting data:

Authorized Lobster and Crab Commercial Licenses 2021-2025					
Zone	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
A	7	11	10	16	14
B	5	4	4	9	10
C	29	37	34	66	49
D	4	4	5	8	9
E	2	3	3	2	3
F	5	4	3	6	5
G	1	1	1	2	3

As you can see from both the ratios and the licenses authorized, the eastern Zones tend to be more permissive with regard to issuing more licenses, while the western zones have selected ratios that are more conservative. However, at their most recent meeting in January, the Zone F Council requested information on the current license and tag trends in their Zone, and discussed the potential to initiate the process to amend their current ratio to something less conservative, such as 3 licenses retired for 1 license issued. This process begins with a survey of all license holders in the Zone, which the Council may choose to initiate at their next meeting.

Since the development of the waiting lists, there has often been frustration from those on the waiting list about the amount of time they must spend on the list before being offered a license. At the direction of this committee, the Department has regularly gone back to the Zone Councils and shared the concerns expressed by some legislators about wait times for certain Zones. However, the Zone Councils have typically maintained the ratios they previously put in place.

I would urge the committee to think about this issue beyond a waiting list. As you are all aware, the lobster industry faces more, very onerous, whale regulations and a 1:1 exit ratio will result in more licenses and more endlines, at a time we need to be looking at ways to reduce risk to endangered right whales.

If the Legislature wants to override the authority previously granted to the Zones, the Department would urge you to closely review the current waiting lists and length of time that prospective license holders have been waiting, to determine if a “one size fits all” solution is actually warranted. We have attached the current Zone waiting lists for your information.

Ultimately, the issues associated with access to licenses in all of Maine’s fisheries are some of the most difficult with which to grapple. There is no “right” answer, as we always discussing how to allocate access to limited resources. Increasing that access impacts existing license holders. Decisions about how and when to expand access to licenses should be made with consideration of many factors, including trends in the resource, and external forces that could impact the fishery going forward, such as the pending risk reductions for the protection of right whales. For these reasons, the Department does not support a blanket application of a 1:1 ratio in every Zone.

Thank you for your consideration and I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.

WAITING LIST - ZONE A

Rank	PARTY_ID	FIRST_NAME	MIDDLE_NAME	LAST_NAME	SUFFIX	TOWN	ZONE_DATE
1	133553	KRISTIN		CROWLEY		JONESPORT	3/2/2021
2	204250	ADAM		BUTLER		CHERRYFIELD	4/28/2021
3	109582	NICK		SILVESTRONE		BAR HARBOR	5/6/2021
4	54515	JAMES	R	LEIGHTON		MILBRIDGE	9/8/2021
5	115503	KYLE	D	LAMSON		ADDISON	1/19/2022
6	138909	ROBERT		STANLEY		STEUBEN	3/9/2022
7	215115	CYRUS		MORGAN		EAST MACHIAS	2/13/2023
8	215104	ALEXANDER		DEPOUTILOFF		HARRINGTON	3/2/2023
9	132726	KELLY	J	HINKLE		ADDISON	6/1/2023
10	212664	KEELAN		GROVER		MILBRIDGE	7/11/2023
11	132891	KENNETH	R H	CHANDLER		COLUMBIA	7/20/2023
12	210181	CYRUS		PICKARD		HANCOCK	9/28/2023
13	214614	CRAIG		MCCONNELL		LUBEC	12/7/2023
14	118785	JUSTIN	M	LANDEEN		GOULDSBORO	1/24/2024
15	121439	AIDAN	W	RITTENHOUSE		ADDISON	3/28/2024
16	201080	JOSEPH	D	HUNTER		EAST MACHIAS	8/15/2024
17	208331	JOSHUA		TURNER		MILBRIDGE	9/12/2024
18	47460	GARY	W	GREENLAW	JR	GOULDSBORO	10/10/2024
19	343139	JACOB		GROVER		GOULDSBORO	11/1/2024
20	60707	CURTIS	B	ALLEY		SULLIVAN	1/14/2025

Zone B Waiting List

Rank	PARTY_ID	FIRST_NAME	MIDDLE_NAME	LAST_NAME	SUFFIX	TOWN	ZONE_DATE	USCG_TRAINING
1	133106	SERENA	E	WALKER		SWANS ISLAND	11/22/2021	9/8/2021
2	215014	NICHOLAS		PASTORE		GOULDSBORO	11/29/2021	10/16/2021
3	332074	SILAS CORWIN		VAN DINE		Ellsworth	7/15/2023	4/10/2023
4	335351	Arthur		Herbest		Southwest Harbor	10/31/2023	10/31/2023
5	336477	Addie		Beal		Seal Cove	7/10/2024	1/19/2024
6	339823	DG Thea		LaMastra		Hulls Cove	7/26/2024	1/8/2024
7	325378	Sam		Flavin		Islesford	10/1/2024	3/29/2024
8	115525	TAYLOR	T	CLEAVES		NORTHEAST HBR	10/4/2024	10/4/2024
9	113668	MICHAEL	J	DUTRA		SOUTHWEST HBR	10/10/2024	8/23/2015
10	114176	JAKE		WHITE		TRENTON	11/7/2024	11/7/2024
11	315162	LIAM		FLUBACHER		WINTER HARBOR	1/9/2025	8/10/2023

ZONE C WAITING LIST

Rank	PARTY_ID	FIRST_NAME	MIDDLE_NAME	LAST_NAME	SUFFIX	TOWN	ZONE	DATE
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ZONE D WAITING LIST

Rank	PARTY_ID	FIRST_NAME	MIDDLE_NAME	LAST_NAME	SUFFIX	TOWN	ZONE_DATE	USCG_TRAINING
1	137188	JACOB		PAYSON		BRUNSWICK	8/23/2018	8/18/2018
2	214166	WILLIAM		CLAYTON		ROCKLAND	1/29/2019	1/26/2019
3	110086	TODD	E	CARBALLO		ROCKLAND	3/6/2019	10/13/2003
4	205684	WILLIAM		GREENROSE		WALDOBORO	5/10/2019	4/27/2019
5	214231	ETHAN		HUPPER		TENANTS HARBOR	5/20/2019	5/20/2019
6	213935	BENJAMIN		DOVE		ISLESBORO	11/11/2019	11/9/2019
7	24725	GREGORY	J	LEMOINE		SWANS ISLAND	11/15/2019	11/8/2002
8	214436	NICHOLAS		CENNAMO		MONHEGAN ISLAND	3/18/2020	9/4/2019
9	46874	KEVIN		DUFOUR		BRISTOL	8/12/2020	12/23/2024
10	214972	BRENDON		MCKEEN		SEARSPORT	8/13/2021	9/19/2020
11	110689	RALPH	R	JONES		ROCKPORT	10/16/2021	10/16/2021
12	215133	CHRISTIAN		BATEMAN		WALDOBORO	4/20/2023	4/20/2023
13	329052	Doug	L	Schneider		Rockland	5/1/2023	9/12/2022
14	215230	JACOB		BARTLETT		THOMASTON	8/9/2023	8/9/2023
15	326710	Alex		Fogarty		Rockland	12/11/2023	11/7/2023
16	102504	JOSHUA	A	REED		FRIENDSHIP	4/1/2024	4/1/2024
17	314520	BRANDON		MCAULIFFE		NORTH HAVEN	9/13/2024	9/13/2024
18	214422	TRAVIS		DODGE		CUSHING	10/8/2024	10/8/2024

ZONE E WAITING LIST

Rank	PARTY_ID	FIRST_NAME	MIDDLE_NAME	LAST_NAME	SUFFIX	TOWN	ZONE_DATE	USCG_TRAINING
1	137878	MATHEW		MULLINS		GEOGETOWN	10/19/2021	10/16/2021
2	137910	THOMAS	R	MAIN		BOOTHBAY	3/3/2022	3/3/2022
3	329215	ALEXANDER JOSEPH		ZDANOVICH		Boothbay	3/22/2023	3/22/2023
4	207761	ZACHARY	J	GAMAGE		WALPOLE	6/30/2024	10/23/2023

ZONE F WAITING LIST

Rank	PARTY_ID	FIRST_NAME	MIDDLE_NAME	LAST_NAME	SUFFIX	TOWN	ZONE_DATE	USCG_TRAINING
1	53566	ANDREW	B	MILLAR		HARPSWELL	12/7/2016	9/1/2007
2	102748	DIRK		MORGAN		HARPSWELL	1/23/2017	
3	203046	COLLEEN		FRANCKE		FALMOUTH	3/24/2017	3/7/2017
4	212789	MOLLY		COFFIN		BATH	5/9/2017	6/10/2016
5	202521	EDWARD		APON		PORTLAND	8/29/2017	6/7/2017
6	136011	TRAVIS		NICKERSON		NEW GLOUCESTER	9/11/2017	11/24/2007
7	310215	KYLE		OLSON		BRUNSWICK	11/8/2017	6/8/2017
8	213917	WILLIAM		DETERT		BRUNSWICK	5/23/2018	6/7/2017
9	1164	NEIL	G	WELNER		BRUNSWICK	10/1/2018	6/2/2005
10	132509	NORMAN		STEVENS	JR	HARPSWELL	12/27/2018	4/13/2016
11	115535	PETER	J	ALBEE		WONALANCET	10/8/2019	2/13/2007
12	210455	JOLENE		WESSEL		HARPSWELL	11/4/2021	11/4/2021
13	214835	SUNSHINE		METCHTENBERG		BRUNSWICK	10/18/2022	4/24/2019
14	207597	DEREK		WHITTEN		SOUTH PORTLAND	4/3/2023	4/3/2023
15	320284	Joseph		Skirbe		Topsham	7/24/2023	7/24/2023
16	150887	JOHN	A	DIETLIN		HARPSWELL	12/27/2023	11/28/2023
17	214169	ASHLEY		CONRAD		LISBON FALLS	3/14/2024	3/14/2024

ZONE G WAITING LIST

Rank	PARTY_ID	FIRST_NAME	MIDDLE_NAME	LAST_NAME	SUFFIX	TOWN	ZONE_DATE	USCG_TRAINING
1	48358	BRAD	H	MACDONALD		SANFORD	1/6/2010	9/6/2007
2	201502	JAMIE	G	IRISH		POLAND	8/8/2010	6/12/2009
3	202124	NATHAN	R	PARADIS		BIDDEFORD	4/25/2011	3/31/2010
4	151877	WILL		HARGROVE		OGUNQUIT	7/25/2011	7/24/2011
5	53259	JEFFREY	D	GUERARD		CAPE NEDDICK	7/29/2011	3/13/2010
6	125489	AMANDA		NIGHTINGALE		WATERBORO	10/21/2011	10/15/2011
7	121621	JONATHAN		GOOGINS		OLD ORCHARD BCH	3/12/2012	3/12/2012
8	141628	COLIN		ROBARE		OLD ORCHARD BCH	12/18/2012	12/18/2012
9	202023	DAVID	L	HAMEL		WELLS	1/19/2013	1/19/2013
10	206818	JON		WEISS		KENNEBUNK	5/11/2014	7/31/2013
11	204713	JONATHAN		THOMPSON		SOUTH BERWICK	8/10/2015	3/22/2014
12	205420	KEVIN		LEWIS		YORK	1/29/2016	4/21/2007
13	211298	JEREMY		BAKER		KITTERY	9/29/2016	9/10/2016
14	59290	ROBERT	G	WILLETTE		SCARBOROUGH	2/9/2017	2/3/2017
15	213883	SAMUEL		MAFERA		SOUTH CASCO	4/22/2018	11/18/2017
16	310896	JESSE		ALBERT		SOUTH PORTLAND	9/24/2019	9/4/2019
17	214834	ANDREW		FEENEY		PORTLAND	7/9/2020	11/1/2019
18	121133	WILLIAM	J	MCKAY	II	KENNEBUNK	10/22/2022	10/22/2022
19	215015	LUKE		BUOTTE		OLD ORCHARD BCH	4/3/2023	4/3/2023
20	104801	JARED	P	WEBBER		YORK	4/23/2024	7/23/2008
21	342106	Ryan		Sirois		Kittery	8/18/2024	9/20/2023