

Chairwoman Senator Tepler, Chairwoman Representative Hepler and distinguished members of the committee

My name is Beau Jeffery, age 29, from Windham, Maine. This is my testimony on LD 336- An act to change the waiting list system for commercial Lobster and crab fishing license.

I am supportive of LD 336, to make changes the waiting list system that the state currently has in place. I have worked the decks of lobster boats as a stern-man for 14 years. It has been a life long dream to captain and own a boat to fish for what our state is known for and built on which is our lobster. With the current system, I don't see how I will live my dreams.

Lobster zone G has 26 people currently on the waiting list with some waiting as long as 15 years. 15 years is an excessive time frame to have to wait to start a career in the lobster and crab industry, after having completed an apprenticeship consisting of 200 days spent at sea, logging 1000 hours over the course of 2 years. With many new regulations and laws being implemented in recent years I fear wait list times will continue to get longer and inhibit me from getting a license even more.

Some issues I personally see is that the commissioner will only issue a new license based on the number of renewed license applicants and lobster trap tags purchased each year which creates inaccuracy within the system.

Some of these inaccuracies include:

- Licenses renewed each year by retired fishermen and people who are not actively fishing whom are still purchasing their maximum amount of tags.
- There are active licensed fishermen purchasing their zones maximum amount of trap tags each year that are not fishing the maximum amount of traps that their zone allows.

This creates inaccurate numbers of active licenses and inaccurate numbers of trap tags in the states water.

My suggestions for changes for the waitlist system:

- Set a reasonable limit on how long a person waits on the list.
- Implement a limit on how long people who don't fish or who have retired can keep their license and tags without proof of any landings.
- Give those on the waitlist a reduced amount of tags while on the waiting list so we can keep everything we learned during our apprenticeships allowing us to work part time until we receive our commercial licence and stay up to date on new laws and regulations.
- Do away with the waiting list system entirely, go to a one out one in system with those who give up their licences.
- Put those who have a suspended lobster license on the back of the list and issue the next recipient on the wait list that opening.

These changes to the current system could greatly benefit not only those on waiting list seeking to start their careers in the industry, it would also benefit all aspects of the industry from lobster buyers, bait dealers, and marine supply shops. It could also boost the economy and create jobs and tax revenue for the state.

I hope you kindly consider my testimony on these issues and work together and make some positive changes to the commercial lobster and crab wait list system.

Thank you,
Beau Jeffery