

Good afternoon, Representative Hepler, Senator Tepler and members of the marine resources committee, my name is Matthew Gilley and I am a 40 year old lobsterman from Harpswell. I serve on the Zone F council as well as multiple other town and state committees involving the fisheries. I am here today to testify in support of LD 968: A Resolve to Study Stakeholder Input Involving the Appointment of the Commissioner of Marine Resources. I want to thank Representative Golek for putting this bill forward for me. To begin, I have the utmost respect for retired commissioner Kehiler; I think he did a wonderful job in a very difficult time and I thank him for the time he spent in the role of commissioner. I also believe that Mr. Wilson will do a wonderful job if he is elected to become our next commissioner. This bill is not intended to diminish the role the governor or legislature have in the election of the commissioner. The commissioner has a very important role in deciding policy, and regulations that will have a major direct effect on the people and businesses that fall under the department's rule and governance. Upon becoming commissioner, they are seated on multiple federal fishery boards and commissions overseeing the rules and regulations that govern the commercial fishing industry. These rules and regulations can have unforeseen economic, mental, and safety effects on the individual fisherman and their businesses with long lasting effects. With no input on the nomination of the commissioner to the fishing industry, the individual fishermen are left out of this process despite them and their businesses being the meat of the very industry the position is intending to support. With the world becoming a more politically charged place, reaching places we thought politics couldn't ever reach, I fear the same for the fishing industry. Doing research to determine the input fishermen have on the election of the commissioner has no negatives and includes those who make up the industry. The fishing industry has always struggled to get fisherman participation in the rulemaking process; if the fishermen felt as though their input was being included and participation was having an effect, I feel this will help to increase fisherman participation. We desperately need younger fishermen to become more involved in all aspects of the industry. LD 968 provides the opportunity to study current stakeholder input in the nomination of the commissioner and provides opportunities for future stakeholder inclusion. One of the major hurdles bills like this face is funding. There would be a very minimal financial impact from having to pay DMR staff to be involved. I think you could find volunteers from multiple fisheries that would be willing to come together and brainstorm towards this goal. Please vote ought to pass.