

# Alewife Harvesters of Maine



"Conserving to preserve Maine's heritage"

March 24, 2025

Greetings Senator Tepler, Representative Hepler, and honorable members of the Joint Standing Committee on Marine Resources. On behalf of the Alewife Harvesters of Maine I would like to voice our support for LD 968 *"Resolve, to Study Stakeholder Input Involving the Appointment of the Commissioner of Marine Resources"*

The Alewife Harvesters of Maine is a non-profit organization that advocates for the sustainable commercial harvest of river herring through conservation, restoration, education, and public outreach activities, as well as submitting testimony to regulatory bodies.

The alewife fishery is unusual as it is the only commercial harvest of a marine species that occurs in fresh water. This presents a unique set of challenges, such as fish passage obstructions within river systems, which requires working with multiple state agencies.

Alewives are an important source of bait for Maine's lobster industry. With the massive cuts in the Atlantic herring quota, alewives will become much needed replacement for Atlantic herring. While many fisheries are being heavily regulated due to stock assessment concerns, Maine's alewife populations are exploding. Last October, the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission approved the opening of five commercial harvest sites in Maine. A trend that we expect to see continue as the positive effects of dam removals and culvert replacements now allow alewives to reach their natal spawning grounds.

The Alewife Harvesters of Maine support LD 968 and respectfully request that a representative from the alewife fishery be added to the list of participants described in this resolve.

Respectfully submitted,



Bailey Bowden

Executive Director

Alewife Harvesters of Maine