



MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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April 10, 2025 - Testimony in support of LD 1253:

An Act to Authorize the Commissioner of Marine Resources to Add Limited-access Area Fishing Days During the Scallop Season

Good afternoon Senator Tepler, Representative Hepler, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Marine Resources. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. My name is Representative Billy Bob Faulkingham, and I serve as the House Republican Leader. I represent House District 12, which includes the towns of Franklin, Gouldsboro, Hancock, Sorrento, Sullivan, Winter Harbor, and Steuben. I am here today to testify in support of my bill, ***LD 1253 – An Act to Authorize the Commissioner of Marine Resources to Add Limited-Access Area Fishing Days During the Scallop Season.***

This legislation seeks to address the challenges faced by Maine's scallop fishery, which is vital to our state's economy and specifically our coastal communities. Over the past several years, the fishery has become increasingly volatile, largely due to shifting weather patterns that have led to losses in fishing days. The short duration of the scallop season already limits the ability of fishermen to earn a livelihood, and the unpredictable nature of weather events further exacerbates this challenge, making it harder for our fishermen to maintain sustainable catch.

The scallop season in Maine typically runs from December through April, with limited fishing days. For many of our fishermen, this season represents a crucial window in which they can support their families, invest in their boats and equipment, and contribute to their local communities. However, extreme weather events such as storms, high winds, and rough seas have led to frequent missed fishing days.

LD 1253 will empower the Commissioner of Marine Resources to add up to five limited-access fishing days during the scallop season. This flexibility is essential for making up for lost days due to weather-related events, and it will help ensure the fishery remains economically viable while also preserving the sustainability of the scallop population.

By granting the Commissioner the discretion to determine when it is appropriate to add extra fishing days, this bill promotes sustainable fishing practices. If the scallop population is healthy enough to withstand additional harvest, these extra days will help increase the overall catch without jeopardizing the long-term health of the fishery. The Maine Department of Marine Resources employs a rigorous, science-based management strategy to safeguard healthy scallop stocks, and this bill would provide the Commissioner the authority to adjust the season as needed based on real-time conditions.

Maine's scallop fishery is an economic pillar, especially for rural coastal communities where fishing is a primary source of income. LD 1253 provides an opportunity to maximize the economic potential of the fishery during a challenging season, supporting both the livelihoods of fishermen and our broader coastal communities.

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

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Billy Bob Faulkingham". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the word "Respectfully,".

Rep. Billy Bob Faulkingham
House Republican Leader