

**TESTIMONY OF
Deirdre Gilbert
Department of Marine Resources**

**The Department of Marine Resources (DMR) is testifying
In Support of
LD 1561 Resolve, Regarding the Percentage of a Lobster and Crab Fishing Licensee's Lobster Traps
That May Be Fished in a Lobster Management Zone Listed on the License as a Secondary Zone
Before the Committee on Marine Resources
Sponsored by Representative Hepler
Date of Hearing: April 17, 2025**

Senator Tepler, Representative Hepler, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Marine Resources, my name is Deirdre Gilbert, Director of State Marine Policy for DMR and I am testifying on behalf of the Department in support of LD 1561.

Under current law, when a lobster license holder purchases their license, they must designate their primary Zone, where they fish a majority of their traps, as well as any secondary Zones, where they might fish any of their gear, not to exceed 49%. When Zones were originally established, the Zone lines were for voting purposes only, and did not limit where someone could fish. However, with the establishment of limited entry, it became necessary to require that license holders fish the majority of their gear in their “home” Zone. The opportunity to identify secondary zones was created to accommodate individuals who live along the Zone lines to provide a reasonable level of fishing across Zone lines.

Since that time, there have been periods where conflicts have flared up, due to situations where one Zone appears to be bringing more gear into its neighboring Zone than vice versa. Currently, the Department is aware that there has been that concern from Zone E – specifically, that Zone F fishermen are bringing more gear, and further, into Zone E than has historically been the case, negatively impacting Zone E fishermen. Zone E and Zone F have recently created subcommittees working together on this topic which has met once, with another meeting currently planned for May.

This is a challenging problem to solve, but DMR would be happy to bring this issue to each Zone Council to see if there is any consensus for changing the percentage of gear that may be fished outside of a license holder’s home Zone. We will bring that information back to this committee with any recommendations that may result.

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