



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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Testimony of Rep. Allison Hepler presenting

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 Joint Standing Committee on Marine Resources

Good afternoon, Senator Tepler and colleagues on the Marine Resources Committee. I am Allison Hepler and I represent the towns of Arrowsic, Georgetown, Phippsburg, West Bath and Woolwich. I am here today to present **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.**

This bill had its genesis in a conversation I had last fall with several lobstermen who fish in Zone E and their concerns about the number of lobstermen who had secondary trap tags allowing them to place their traps in Zone E. Currently, Maine statute allows fishermen to place up to 49% of their gear in "other zones," commonly called "secondary zones," as long as they indicate these declarations on their license.

Zone E adopted a 600-trap limit in 2000 for conservation reasons. Having up to 49% of traps from fishermen in other zones being fished in Zone E can limit the impact of that conservation effort. This prompted a long conversation about various ways the zones could maintain some level of control over the number of traps fished in any particular zone. We also speculated on any unintended consequences and whether each zone council would have the authority (or want to have the authority) to limit secondary tags. We also discussed whether changing the percentage of secondary tags or changing it to a specific number of tags would work. We wondered whether the concerns were more prevalent for fishermen who fish on the zone line.

This resolve is the result of those conversations. And it coincides with this committee's desire for more involvement in zone councils and promoting more decision making within zone council authority. This resolve asks the Department of Marine Resources to seek feedback from the zone councils about this issue and to come back to this committee with results and any recommendation regarding secondary traps. I chose a resolve in order to preserve the option of submitting a bill in the Second Regular Session of the 132nd Legislature based on the report from the Department.

Thanks for your time and I am happy to answer any questions you may have.