

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

**The Department of Marine Resources (DMR) is testifying
In Support of
LD 1503 An Act to Create a Green Crab Only Wholesale Dealer License
Before the Committee on Marine Resources
Sponsored by Representative Golek
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 1503.

Under current law, in order to buy, sell, process, ship, or transport any marine species or their parts in the wholesale trade, a person must hold a wholesale seafood dealer license, the fee for which is \$192.75.

Green crabs are an invasive species which likely first came to Maine in ballast water in the mid-1800's. The green crab population has increased dramatically in recent years, coinciding with an increase in ocean temperatures. Green crabs feed on shellfish resources such as blue mussels and soft-shell clams, threatening the state's important wild fisheries. Recent anecdotal information indicates green crabs are expanding into subtidal habitats.

Due to their abundance and the damage they are causing, there has been interest in developing viable commercial markets for green crabs, but it has proved challenging. DMR wants to support any efforts to develop a fishery that could successfully deplete their abundance. Toward that end, the harvester license is an extremely low cost license, so that licensing does not present a hurdle to anyone who might wish to attempt this fishery. Similarly, DMR is open to the idea of creating a low cost (\$50) dealer license for green crabs only as LD 1503 proposes, so that a person who wants to attempt to develop these markets has a low barrier to entry.

The Department appreciates that this has been advanced with a sunset provision, so that we can track interest over a period of 5 years. If people are successful in developing these markets, we are hopeful that in time, the existing dealer license will prove sufficient for their needs, and this carve out will no longer be necessary.

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