



MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

2 STATE HOUSE STATION
AUGUSTA, MAINE 04333-0002
(207) 287-1440
TTY: (207) 287-4469

May 8, 2025 - Testimony in support of LD 1790:

"An Act Regarding Lobster Measurement"

Good morning 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 1790 - "An Act Regarding Lobster Measurement."***

The lobster fishery is the economic backbone of Maine's Downeast communities, and it has long stood as the national and international model of sustainable fishery management. LD 1790 seeks to make a small but important change in how we handle one key regulatory aspect of this fishery, the setting of minimum and maximum lobster size limits.

Specifically, LD 1790 removes the authority of the Maine Commissioner of Marine Resources to unilaterally change lobster size limits through rulemaking. Instead, any proposed changes would need to come before the Maine Legislature in the form of legislation, should those changes be necessary to comply with the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) plan.

This bill is not about ignoring science or walking away from cooperative fishery management. Quite the opposite, it ensures that when major regulatory changes are proposed, they undergo a full and open legislative process. That means greater transparency, increased stakeholder engagement, and ultimately, stronger public trust in the decisions that affect thousands of hardworking fishermen.

Let me highlight a few key reasons why this change is both reasonable and necessary:

- Adjustments to the minimum or maximum size can have a direct and immediate impact on landings, income, and the livelihood of Maine's lobstermen. These are not minor modifications, these are policy decisions that should be made with full legislative oversight. For example, a small increase in the minimum size by even a fraction could make millions of lobsters uncatchable overnight, severely impacting the industry.
- As this Joint Committee has demonstrated in the past, Maine's Legislature is fully capable of acting quickly when necessary. This bill does not stand in the way of Maine's compliance with ASMFC mandates. Rather, it simply requires the Department of Marine Resources to submit a bill, just like this one, when those mandates would require changes to size limits. We trust this Committee and the entire Legislature to act in the best interests of both the state and its fishermen, as we have done in the past, and will continue to do so in the future.

- Currently, too much decision-making power is concentrated in one government office. While I have the utmost respect for the Commissioner and the Department of Marine Resources, it is inappropriate for decisions of this magnitude to bypass the Legislature. Our state Constitution vests lawmaking power with elected representatives for a reason: to ensure accountability, foster debate, and give voice to the concerns of our constituents.

Let me close by emphasizing that this bill does not remove Maine from the cooperative fisheries management process. We remain committed partners in the ASMFC and in a sustainable fishery management. However, those decisions must reflect Maine's values, the best interest of Maine's Downeast economy, and the voices of Maine's fishermen.

I urge the Committee to vote Ought to Pass on LD 1790 to ensure that our state maintains both regulatory compliance and accountability to our hardworking fishermen. Thank you, and I'm happy to answer any questions.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Billy Bob Faulkingham".

Rep. Billy Bob Faulkingham
House Republican Leader