

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

**The Department of Marine Resources (DMR) is testifying
In Support Of
LD 2024 An Act to Make Changes to Certain Licensing Laws Governing For-hire Charter Boat
Operators, Lobster and Crab Fishing and Elver Dealers
Before the Committee on Marine Resources
Sponsored by Representative Hepler
Date of Hearing: February 12, 2026**

Senator Tepler, Representative Hepler, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Marine Resources, my name is Deirdre Gilbert, I am Director of State Marine Policy at the Maine Department of Marine Resources, and I am testifying on behalf of the Department support of LD 2024. This is a Department bill and we are grateful to Representative Hepler for sponsoring it on our behalf.

LD 2024 represents the Department's "technical changes" bill for this legislative session, making minor clarifying changes to marine resources statutes. Specifically LD 2024:

- Clarifies eligibility requirements for the "for-hire charter boat license" created last session. Specifically, the Department is proposing amended language to better capture what license an individual who does not hold a tidewater guide's license issued by IFW must hold. Based on further discussions with Marine Patrol, the following is their recommended language:

Possesses a valid United States Merchant Mariner Credential issued by the United States Coast Guard indicating an endorsement authorizing the individual to carry passengers for hire.

- Under current law, there are two penalties provided for exceeding the lobster trap limit. LD 2024 seeks to eliminate the civil penalty and retain the existing criminal penalty, which is what these violations are typically written under. The criminal penalty also carries a mandatory suspension, while the civil penalty does not. This will avoid two license holders who commit the same violation from being charged differently, depending on which section of law they are written under.
- It removes a prohibition on issuing an elver dealer's license or supplemental license to a person using the same business address as a person who has violated certain laws governing elver dealers for at least 5 years following the violation. Last session, the committee decided to solve the problem of elver dealers who have been convicted of an elver violation continuing to benefit from the fishery by having other companies use their property in a different manner, so the Department does not believe that this prohibition was intended to remain.

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