

Julie Eaton  
Maine Lobstering Union

04/12/202

Chairman Senator Jim Dill, Chairman Representative Scott Landry and Distinguished  
Members of the Committee on Inland Fisheries and Wildlife,

My name is Julie Eaton, and I am a Stonington lobster boat captain of 38 years and chair of the Maine Lobstering Union's Legislative Committee.

We are extremely concerned about L.D. 114- An Act to Address Airboat Operation in the State and L.D. 89- An Act to Regulate Airboats. We are testifying OPPOSED to these bills.

Maine is a State with extraordinarily rich fishing heritage, and we are known for our hard work ethic and sheer determination which is truly what it takes to bring the freshest seafood to our country and the world.

We are opposing this bill because although this currently involves airboats, we feel that it establishes a dangerous precedent for the future.

Our fishing fleet leaves early in the morning and arrives back in port often late at night. Boats traveling offshore 20-50 miles out, leave as early as 2am and often will not return until long after dark. Our boats & crew make noise. We already have speed restrictions coming and going out of the harbor which eliminates a large portion of the noise as we are not racing or revving our engines. Although no one yet lobsters from an air boat, by establishing these defined time limits and sound level restrictions, it will not be long before someone will attempt to place these restrictions on us as well. Residents unfamiliar with the importance of our ocean-bound culture to our State and coastal communities, could try to prevent us from leaving before 7am or limit the size of our engines.

I have to say that if I lived beside a 6-lane highway such as the Maine Turnpike south, the noise would make me a little crazy. I live on an island and that much traffic would really bother me! I could not live there but it does not mean that there are not people who would be happy to live there and who would not be bothered by the noise. Neither does it mean that the trucks traveling on the turnpike bringing in our supplies, should be limited to the times of day they can travel the roads! It takes us all doing our part to make our State work!

My harbor has several hundred boats. Although we do not all leave at the same time, by 7am, I personally have hauled my first 100 traps. It takes time to haul, and we must start early. For neighbors who are annoyed by the noise boat motors make, I have to say that again Maine is a fishing state with many fishing industries. If the noise coming in off the water is so loud that it is a problem, perhaps they are too close to the shore. Fishing, albeit freshwater or saltwater, has happened here for many generations. God willing it will continue for many more.

We ask you to oppose these bills and protect our States fine history of fishing and enjoying our ponds, lakes, and sea.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this issue.

Respectfully,

Captain Julie Eaton  
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