



Testimony on LD 338

An Act To Amend the Law Governing the Maine Lobster Marketing Collaborative

Tuesday February 23<sup>rd</sup> 2021

Hon. Brian Langley Chair Maine Lobster Marketing Collaborative

Senator Miramont, Representative McCreight and esteemed members of the Marine Resources Committee, my name is Brian Langley and I reside in Ellsworth. I served in the legislature from 2008 to 2018 and served two terms on this committee and also represented Maine on the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission for 6 years. I own and operate the Union River Lobster Pot in Ellsworth. I am here to testify in support of LD 338, “An Act To Amend the Law Governing the Maine Lobster Marketing Collaborative”.

After terming out of the legislature I was tasked to serve on the Maine Lobster Marketing Collaborative and subsequently nominated to chair the committee. I have served just over a year now and wow, has the playing field changed. The focus a year ago was on promoting lobster to major restaurants, hotels, commercial food service suppliers and cruise ships.

Early in 2020 the pandemic exploded and the restaurant, hotel, commercial food service pipeline collapsed. Luckily for Maine lobster catchers, dealers had strong relationships with supermarkets and with a quick pivot the marketing firm that works with the collaborative aimed the focus on the home consumer. My conversations with dealers in my area confirmed that early on lobster sales slowed but the pipeline was moving. Lobsters were being sold. And as the summer progressed the price for lobster held up. Maine was very fortunate to have had in place a marketing plan and a national agency to continue to promote Maine Lobster.

If the pandemic wasn't enough, the issue with Wright Whales, continues to pose a threat to the sale of Maine lobster domestically and abroad. The marketing plan includes promoting the lobster fishery as sustainable and highlights our lobster catchers as stewards of the fishery.

The board has a good combination of harvesters, dealers, retail and foodservice representatives along with regulatory representation. I believe the collaborative necessary in a world with incredible competition for center of the plate proteins. Maine has a great story to tell and when Marianne LaCroix presents the outcomes, I hope you will agree. I urge you to support LD 338. Thank you and I will answer any questions you may have.