

**Title: An Act Regarding Limited-entry Lobster and Crab Fishing License System**

**Be it enacted by the People of the State of Maine as follows:**

**Sec. 1. 12 MRSA §6448, sub-§4** is amended to read:

**4. Limited-entry zone as declared lobster zone.** A person may not be issued a Class I, Class II or Class III lobster and crab fishing license that identifies a limited-entry zone as the declared lobster zone unless that person:

A. Held in the previous licensing year a Class I, Class II or Class III lobster and crab fishing license that identified that zone as the person's declared lobster zone; ~~or~~

B. Is authorized as a new zone entrant by the commissioner pursuant to subsection 7-A to declare that zone as the person's declared lobster zone; or

C. Is authorized as a new zone entrant by the commissioner pursuant to subsection 7-B to declare that zone as the person's declared lobster zone.

**Sec. 2. 12 MRSA §6448, sub-§7-B** is enacted to read:

**7-B. New zone entrants on the waiting list for 10 or more years.** Notwithstanding subsection 7-A, the commissioner shall, by April 1<sup>st</sup> of each licensing year beginning in 2023, authorize new zone entrants that have been on the waiting list pursuant to subsection 6 for 10 or more years and has met the eligibility requirements under section 6421, subsection 5. A new zone entrant authorized under this subsection shall comply with the trap tag limits established in section 6431-F, subsection 2, paragraph A. The commissioner shall notify the authorized new zone entrants by certified mail. If a person does not declare a zone within 30 days after receiving the notification by certified mail, that person must be taken off the waiting list. If a person who holds a current Class I, Class II or Class III lobster and crab fishing license is authorized as a new zone entrant and declares the zone as that person's declared lobster zone, the commissioner shall change the zone identified on that person's license to the limited-entry zone for which the person is authorized.

**Sec. 3. Phase-in of wait list entrants.** Notwithstanding any other provision of law to the contrary, the Commissioner of the Department of Marine Resources shall, upon the effective date of this Act, authorize, in chronological order of requests received under Maine Revised Statutes, Title 12, section 6448 subsection 5, one half of all new zone entrants for limited-entry lobster zones that have been on the waiting list pursuant to Maine Revised Statutes, Title 12, section 6448, subsection 6 for more than 10 years and have met the eligibility requirements under section 6421, subsection 5. On January 1, 2022, the commissioner shall authorize, in chronological order of requests received under Maine Revised Statutes, Title 12, section 6448, subsection 5, all new zone entrants for limited-entry lobster zones that have been on the waiting list pursuant to Maine Revised Statutes, Title 12, section 6448, subsection 6 for more than 10 years and have met the eligibility requirements under Maine Revised Statutes Title 12 section 6421, subsection 5.

## SUMMARY

This bill directs the Commissioner of Marine Resources to authorize new zone entrants for a limited-entry lobster zone who have been on a waiting list for 10 years starting in 2023. This bill directs the Commissioner to authorize one-half of all new zone entrants who have been waiting more than 10 years on the effective date of the Act. It directs the commissioner to authorize, on January 1, 2022, all new zone applicants who have been waiting more than 10 years. A person authorized as a new zone entrant under this bill must adhere to specific trap tag limits.