

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

**The Department of Marine Resources (DMR) is testifying
In Support of
LD 1759 An Act To Extend the Legal Hours for Harvesting Lobster in the Month of September
Before the Committee on Marine Resources
Sponsored by Representative McDonald
Date of Hearing: February 1, 2022**

Senator Miramant, Representative McCreight, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Marine Resources, my name is Deirdre Gilbert, Director of State Marine Policy at the Department of Marine Resources, and I am testifying on behalf of the Department in support of LD 1759.

There has been a long-standing prohibition on the hauling of lobster traps during the period from ½ hour after sunset until ½ hour before sunrise during the summer months. Historically, that prohibition has provided an enforcement benefit during the time of year when fishing activity was the highest, and inshore gear was the densest. Preventing hauling at night reduced the opportunity for gear molestation and also reduced gear conflict.

Over time, patterns of fishing activity have evolved, with fishermen fishing later into the fall, as well farther offshore. In consideration of these changes, the laws regarding haul times have also been revisited. In 2017 this same section of law was amended to allow lobstermen to begin hauling at 4 am in October (instead of having to wait until ½ hour before sunrise). This proposed legislation would extend this same change to the month of September.

Maine Marine Patrol has reviewed this proposed change and does not feel it presents significant enforcement challenges. Understanding it provides a practical benefit to fishermen to be able to haul beginning at 4 am in September, the Department is supportive of this change.

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