



Maine Lobstering Union

Local 207



150 Bar Harbor rd, Trenton, ME 04605

March 28, 2024

Senator Reny, Representative Hepler, and honorable members of the joint standing Marine Resource Committee.

My name is Virginia Olsen, a lobsterman from Stonington and I work for District 4 of the Machinists Union. We support LD 2275 An Act to Ensure That Rules Regarding the Atlantic Marine Fisheries Commission Are Major Substantive Rules.

We have all heard how the hearing numbers are getting worse and worse. The fishermen all say they are tired of going to meetings where nothing changes and their voice is not heard again, just another waste of time. We have unprecedented changes facing our industry and need to rebuild this relationship between managers, scientists, and fishermen. When the industry comes to Augusta, they all can track and participate in these hearings. Maine also borders another country participating in the same economic pool. So, we get a special pinch in the middle. If we conserve a resource by releasing the species, it does nothing if the boat beside us is allowed to bring it to market and land the product. LD 2275 would not stop ASMFC rules and management plans from being implemented. It would change the timeline and offer different options to participate in the process. This change should impact only changes made to the Fisheries Management Plan, not emergency closures or quota increases. This would also offer the best option for our legislature to represent the industry in the collaborative collection of data used to regulate the industry. For example, we use a ventless trap survey to inform our current stock assessments. DMR gives the fisherman the location and depth to place the trap and you record everything you catch. We want to continue the program as is and add a data subset that reflects a few people in each zone placing the ventless traps where they believe they will do well. We want to talk over the information we are seeing and make sure we are not put in an impossible place between ASMFC rules and those of neighboring countries. We want the ability to discuss ideas in a shared collective and figure out new ideas in management.

Respectfully submitted,

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Maine Lobstering Union
LD 2275

I will try to jump on Zoom too.