



Jared Golden
Congress of the United States
2nd District of Maine

October 8, 2024

Robert Beal
Executive Director
Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission
1050 North Highland St, Suite 200 A-N
Arlington, VA 22201

Dear Director Beal and Commissioners,

I am writing to you again requesting that the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) and the American Lobster Board delay the implementation of the Lobster Management Area 1 gauge increase, Addendum XXVII, currently scheduled to begin in January 2025. While I believe that the proposal as written in Addendum XXXI to delay a gauge increase until July 1, 2025, is the better of the two options presented by the ASMFC, I encourage the Commission to proceed solely based on the full consideration of all data sources and a commitment from Canadian regulators to enhance their conservation measures.

As you know, the intent of Addendum XXVII is to mitigate declining stocks of American lobster proactively, a goal shared by harvesters, dealers, and the ASFMC. In my conversations with lobstermen and dealers, it has always been clear that their top concerns are the sustainability of the stock and the ability for it to be harvested by future generations. That is why, as I previously stated in my letter to you on April 29, 2024, I am concerned that the data used to arrive at the trigger index for a gauge increase is overly precautionary and has limitations that do not entirely reflect the current status of the stock.

It is my hope that the ASFMC will ultimately support a long-term pause of the amendment to allow additional time for the technical committee to consider the stock's health more carefully while considering other resiliency measures and incorporating thorough scientific data and objective analysis acceptable to regulators and members of the commercial lobster fishery. Other data that has not been considered or will become available include mandatory harvester reporting, the conservation equivalent from a reduction of overall lobster licenses, and the 2025 lobster stock assessment. These efforts should coincide with robust engagement with your Canadian counterparts to address the regulatory disparity between American and Canadian lobstermen and create a level playing field for all harvesters in the Gulf of Maine.

Without a longer-term pause, devastating economic consequences are on the horizon for Maine's lobster industry. For the latest year data is available, it is estimated that if Addendum XXVII goes into effect, it would decrease the value of lobster landings, resulting in a loss of over 680 jobs and \$59.6 million to Maine's economy. I am deeply concerned about how this economic impact would impact the industry and the hundreds of communities in Maine that depend on a viable lobster fishery. Few involved in the fishery or these communities are adequately prepared for the economic disruption that would likely occur.

These decisions must always include those with significant experience, the harvesters themselves. I trust that you, as the regulators, will also consider and incorporate their invaluable input in matters before you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jared F. Golden". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Jared" and last name "Golden" clearly distinguishable.

Jared F. Golden
Member of Congress