



132nd MAINE LEGISLATURE

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Legislative Document

No. 1176

H.P. 781

House of Representatives, March 20, 2025

**An Act to Provide for the Sustainable Management of Marine
Resources and Create a Noncommercial Northern Shrimp License**

Submitted by the Department of Marine Resources pursuant to Joint Rule 204.
Reference to the Committee on Marine Resources suggested and ordered printed.

Robert B. Hunt
ROBERT B. HUNT
Clerk

Presented by Representative EATON of Deer Isle.

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

2 **Sec. 1. 12 MRSA §6171-B, sub-§1**, as amended by PL 2003, c. 248, §2, is further
3 amended to read:

4 **1. Definitions.** As used in this section, unless the context otherwise indicates, the
5 following terms have the following meanings.

6 A. "Emerging fishery" means the commercial fishing for any marine organism, except
7 herring and groundfish species, that requires a commercial fishing license issued under
8 section 6501 or a commercial pelagic and anadromous fishing license issued under
9 section 6502-A.

10 B. "Endorsement" means an authorization, identified on a commercial fishing license
11 issued under section 6501 or a commercial pelagic and anadromous fishing license
12 issued under section 6502-A, to harvest, possess, transport and sell a specific marine
13 organism for which there is an emerging fishery.

14 **Sec. 2. 12 MRSA §6171-B, sub-§2**, as enacted by PL 1999, c. 297, §1, is amended
15 to read:

16 **2. Determination of sustainability.** The commissioner may investigate conditions
17 affecting marine resources and, with the advice and consent of the Marine Resources
18 Advisory Council, may require a person to hold an endorsement to participate in an
19 emerging fishery if the commissioner determines that a marine organism or its habitat is
20 under increasing pressure that could impact its sustainability or if the commissioner
21 determines that a marine organism is becoming established in the waters of this State and
22 that access to that marine organism must be limited to ensure its sustainable management.
23 The commissioner shall ensure that emerging fisheries do not develop at a rate that is not
24 sustainable on a long-term basis.

25 Harvesters involved in an emerging fishery may petition the commissioner to investigate
26 the sustainability of that emerging fishery.

27 **Sec. 3. 12 MRSA §6171-B, sub-§4**, as enacted by PL 1999, c. 297, §1, is amended
28 to read:

29 **4. Endorsement required.** Notwithstanding ~~section~~ sections 6501 and 6502-A, a
30 person may not fish for, take, possess, ship, transport or sell a marine organism for which
31 an endorsement is required pursuant to subsection 2 unless that person holds a current
32 commercial fishing license or a commercial pelagic and anadromous fishing license with
33 an endorsement for that organism, except that a license with an endorsement is not required
34 for that person to fish for, take, possess or transport the organism only for personal use.

35 A fee may not be charged for an endorsement required pursuant to this section.

36 **Sec. 4. 12 MRSA §6804**, as amended by PL 2017, c. 346, §§1 and 2, is further
37 amended to read:

38 **§6804. ~~Commercial northern~~ Northern shrimp license**

39 **1. License required.** A person may not engage in the activities authorized under this
40 section without a current:

41 A. Resident commercial northern shrimp license;

- 1 B. Resident with crew commercial northern shrimp license; or
- 2 C. Nonresident with crew commercial northern shrimp license; or
- 3 D. Resident noncommercial northern shrimp license.

4 **2. Licensed activities.** Except as limited pursuant to subsection 2-A, ~~the holder of a~~
5 ~~commercial northern shrimp license may fish for or take shrimp or possess, ship, transport~~
6 ~~or sell northern shrimp that the license holder has taken. A license issued under subsection~~
7 ~~7, paragraph B or C also authorizes unlicensed crew members aboard the vessel declared~~
8 ~~by the license holder to engage in these activities.:~~

9 A. A holder of a commercial northern shrimp license may fish for or take northern
10 shrimp or possess, ship, transport or sell northern shrimp that the license holder has
11 taken. A license issued under subsection 7, paragraph B or C also authorizes
12 unlicensed crew members aboard the vessel declared by the license holder to engage
13 in these activities; and

14 B. A holder of a resident noncommercial northern shrimp license may fish for or take
15 northern shrimp or possess, ship or transport northern shrimp that the license holder
16 has taken.

17 **2-A. Licenses Commercial licenses limited.** The commissioner may establish by
18 rule a system to limit the number of commercial northern shrimp licenses issued under this
19 section when the total allowable catch for northern shrimp established for Maine by the
20 Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission is less than 2,000 metric tons. Rules adopted
21 pursuant to this subsection are routine technical rules as defined in Title 5, chapter 375,
22 subchapter 2-A.

23 Prior to initiating rulemaking, the commissioner shall consult with members of the northern
24 shrimp industry, including individuals who are eligible to obtain a license that allows
25 fishing for or taking northern shrimp and holders of a license or permit issued under chapter
26 625 that allows wholesale or retail activity involving northern shrimp.

27 The commissioner shall provide a report regarding management of the northern shrimp
28 resource and the northern shrimp fishing industry to the joint standing committee of the
29 Legislature having jurisdiction over marine resources matters by January 15th of the year
30 following a year in which the commissioner limited the number of licenses issued under
31 this section. The joint standing committee may report out legislation to the session of the
32 Legislature in which the report was received regarding management of the northern shrimp
33 resource or the northern shrimp fishing industry.

34 **3. Boat Commercial license holder boat declaration.** The commercial license
35 holder shall declare the name of the vessel to be used for fishing under the commercial
36 northern shrimp license at the time of application for the license and may not change that
37 declaration during the license year unless the original vessel is sold and replaced, has been
38 damaged and will be under repair for not less than one month or has been destroyed or lost.

39 ~~**5. Exemption.** Notwithstanding subsection 1, a license is not required to fish for, take,~~
40 ~~possess or transport up to one standard fish tote of northern shrimp only for personal use.~~
41 ~~This exemption does not apply to an individual whose ability to obtain a commercial~~
42 ~~northern shrimp license has been suspended by the commissioner.~~

