

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 28, 2016

The Honorable John F. Kerry
Secretary
Department of State
Washington, DC 20520

The Honorable Michael Froman
Office of the United States Trade Representative
600 17th Street NW
Washington, DC 20508

Dr. Kathryn Sullivan
Administrator
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
Silver Spring, MD 20815

Dear Secretary Kerry, Ambassador Froman, and Administrator Sullivan:

We write to express our extreme concern over recent efforts by the Swedish Ministry of Environment and Energy to reclassify live Maine lobster as an invasive species and ban the importation of live lobsters to the entire 28-member European Union (EU). We urge you to engage in immediate efforts to ensure the continuation of safe and responsible import of live Maine lobsters, consistent with the EU's World Trade Organization (WTO) obligations.

The trans-Atlantic lobster trade, with an annual value of about \$196 million, is important for both North America and Europe. As live lobsters are Maine's top export to the EU, any attempt to halt their import could have serious ramifications for Maine lobstermen and their families. Access to the European market is essential for the maritime economy of our state.

While we understand Sweden's desire to preserve the integrity of their native species, it is critical that any action taken by the European Commission be consistent with WTO rules. Among other rules, the WTO requires that animal health protection measures be based on scientific principles, supported by scientific evidence. Moreover, such measures may not be disguised restrictions on international trade.

For decades, Maine has safely exported live lobster around the world. Studies by the University of Maine, a global leader in the scientific study of lobsters, have indicated the risk of Maine lobsters interbreeding with European lobsters is extraordinarily low. They also report that disease transmission risks associated with inadvertent contact are small, for reasons related to significant differences between European and Maine sea

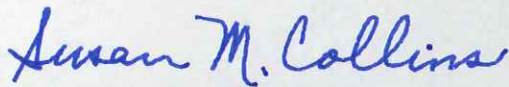
temperatures.

Statements by the European Commission do not deem the appearance of alien species in new locations as a necessary cause for concern. Since only a small number of Maine lobsters have been found in foreign waters, we believe regulators should take a more finely tuned approach before calling this an "invasion." Some reports have suggested that individuals are releasing lobsters into European waters after their arrival. If this is the case, such a violation should be handled first by local law enforcement, rather than used to erect a barrier to legitimate international trade. It is important that any action be as prescriptive as possible. We hope the European Commission will exhaust all other options before potentially alienating a successful trading market.

It is in the best interest of all parties involved to maintain this sector of trans-Atlantic trade that supports so many Mainers and their families. Our lobstermen have heeded calls by President Obama to build export markets. We now need your help to ensure that the EU does not erect unjustified barriers to these markets.

Thank you for your consideration of our request. We look forward to hearing from you about steps that you and others in the Administration are taking to ensure live Maine lobsters remain available throughout Europe.

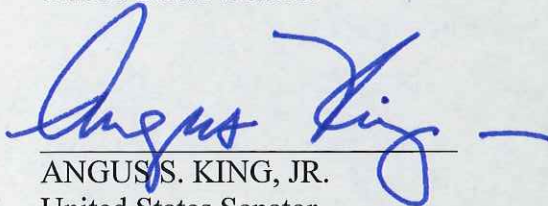
Sincerely,



SUSAN M. COLLINS
United States Senator



CHELLIE PINGREE
Member of Congress



ANGUS S. KING, JR.
United States Senator



BRUCE POLIQUIN
Member of Congress

cc: Honorable Penny Pritzker, Secretary, United States Department of Commerce