

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

April 29, 2022

The Honorable Matt Cartwright
Chairman
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice,
Science, and Related Agencies
H-310, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Robert B. Aderholt
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice,
Science, and Related Agencies
1036 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Cartwright and Ranking Member Aderholt:

As you develop the Fiscal Year 2023 (FY23) Commerce, Justice, Science and Related Agencies appropriations bill, we urge you to include additional assistance to ensure the future economic viability of America's lobster industry and the thousands of communities throughout the New England region whose economies depend on this natural resource.

In response to an Unusual Mortality Event declared by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) for the endangered North Atlantic Right Whale, last year the agency finalized a new 10-year regulatory modification to the Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Plan (ALWTRP), phasing in a series of new measures – a combination of lobster gear modification requirements and the implementation of a new 1,000 square mile closed area where fishing with vertical lines would be prohibited – to protect the endangered right whale species. Despite the fact that according to NOAA's own data, not a single right whale death has been affirmatively linked to the U.S. lobster fishery, the agency is requiring the lobster industry to reduce the risk it poses to right whales by 98 percent by 2030, which both state officials and lobstermen have could altogether eliminate the lobster fishery.

The American lobster fishery is one of our nation's most valuable fisheries, exceeding \$600 million per year in landings revenue, generating at least \$2 billion in economic activity throughout New England and supporting thousands of jobs in coastal communities from Connecticut to Maine. Absent federal financial support, the costs associated with complying with these new regulations would be devastating to the thousands of lobstermen and women, small business owners already operating under thin margins. Unless Congress acts, this historic and iconic industry may no longer exist within the next few decades.

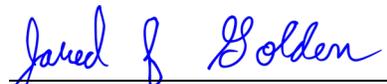
While we are grateful for the \$14 million that was included in the *Fiscal Year 2022 Consolidated Appropriations Act* to alleviate some of the financial burdens facing the lobster industry, more resources are necessary. That is why we are requesting that at least \$20 million be included in the FY23 Commerce, Justice, Science and Related Agencies appropriations bill for

the Northeast lobster fishery to help defray the cost of compliance with the new ALWTRP regulations.

Consistent with the FY22 omnibus legislation, funding should be used by industry participants for gear modification, configuration, and marking, direct economic assistance to lobstermen and dependent communities to offset losses from planned area closures, and for long-term planning to ensure the economic viability and resiliency of the fishery and dependent communities as they adapt to changing ocean conditions.

We appreciate your attention to this important matter and look forward to working with you to support this historic and iconic American industry.

Sincerely,



Jared Golden
Member of Congress



Chellie Pingree
Member of Congress



Seth Moulton
Member of Congress



Stephen F. Lynch
Member of Congress