

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

September 14, 2026

The Honorable Ted Cruz
Chairman
Senate Committee on Commerce,
Science, and Transportation
Washington DC, 20510

The Honorable Maria Cantwell
Ranking Member
Senate Committee on Commerce,
Science, and Transportation
Washington DC, 20510

Dear Chairman Cruz and Ranking Member Cantwell:

We write to share our strong support for H.R. 9436, the Northeast Lobstermen Protection Act which was introduced by Representatives Michael Lawler and Jared Golden. This legislation, which recently passed the House with bipartisan support, would extend the pause on new North Atlantic right whale regulations through 2035.

This pause is necessary to protect Maine's lobster fishery, which is essential to the state's economy and coastal communities. According to the Maine Lobstermen's Association, the lobster industry supports an estimated \$2 billion in annual economic activity and more than 17,500 jobs.

In 2022, the Maine lobster fishery faced punitive regulations based on flawed science that would have effectively shut down the fishery. At the urging of the Maine delegation, the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2023 provided a six-year implementation pause on those proposed federal regulations through December 31, 2028. Since then, the Maine Department of Marine Resources has used congressionally appropriated funds to establish a right whale research and monitoring program that is now in its third year of data collection. The program includes aerial, vessel-based, and acoustic whale monitoring. This work is ongoing, and extending the pause would allow it to continue and provide scientists and regulators with better data to inform future management decisions.

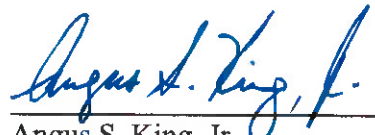
It is critical that any future regulatory actions appropriately balance protecting North Atlantic right whales with the economic and practical realities facing Maine's lobster industry. We ask that you work to advance H.R. 9436 as soon as possible.

Thank you for your leadership and consideration. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



Susan M. Collins
United States Senator



Angus S. King, Jr.
United States Senator