



United States Department of State

Washington, D.C. 20520

APR 12 2016

The Honorable
Susan M. Collins
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

APR 14 2016

Dear Senator Collins:

Thank you for your March 28 letter regarding the Swedish Ministry of Environment and Energy's effort to classify American Lobster as an invasive species and ban imports of live lobsters into the European Union (EU). We are actively working to ensure that the European Commission does not impede the legitimate trade of live lobsters, including those from Maine.

In late February, the Swedish government introduced a risk assessment study to the EU Directorate-General for Environment's Working Group on Biodiversity concluding that the American Lobster, *Homarus Americanus*, has been found in Swedish, Norwegian, and English waters, and that this species threatens local lobster species. The risk assessment study is the basis for Sweden's request that the European Commission consider the possible inclusion of the American Lobster in the EU list of Invasive Alien Species. Such inclusion could lead to a ban of imported live lobsters from the United States and Canada. However, the Commission must also consider the economic consequences of such a ban. The State Department is engaged with other U.S. agencies on this matter, and the Administration is working with academic and industry experts to evaluate the scientific basis of Sweden's risk assessment.

We strongly agree that it is important to maintain trade that supports the economies on both sides of the Atlantic. The Administration is in close contact with European officials to try to ensure that U.S. exports of live lobsters are not unjustifiably restricted, and we are working through our missions in Europe to emphasize that the EU should only take measures based on sound science. Our Ambassador in Sweden has also engaged with senior Swedish officials on the matter.

Thank you for the information and views expressed in your letter. We will incorporate your concerns into our effort and welcome any additional information you believe can help us achieve our common goal of protecting the trade of live lobsters.

We hope this information is useful. Please do not hesitate to contact us if we can be of further assistance on this or any other matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Julia Frifield".

Julia Frifield
Assistant Secretary
Legislative Affairs