

July 9, 2026

David M. Tarr
Lobster Advisory Council, Chair
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The Honorable Bruce Westerman, Chairman
Committee on Natural Resources
U.S. House Of Representatives
1324 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Jared Huffman, Ranking Member
Committee on Natural Resources
1324 Longworth House Office Building
U.S. House Of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Chairman Westerman, Ranking Member Huffman, and Members of the Committee,

The Maine Lobster Advisory Council (LAC) is comprised of elected representatives of Maine's seven lobster zones, representing 4,800 commercial lobster fishermen and their crews. We also have two dealer representatives speaking for three hundred lobster dealers, an at-large member from the general public, as well as a non-zone council lobsterman.

At our June 30, 2026 meeting, the council unanimously voted to support HR 9436, which was introduced by Rep. Micheal Lawler and co-sponsored by Rep. Jared Golden.

Maine has been proactive, during the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2023, which allowed for a pause in action, in gathering better data on the movement and numbers of North American right whales. Before this pause, little was known about the whales in the Gulf of Maine. NOAA rarely made flights to find the whales in that area. Maine Department of Marine Resources has deployed a vast network of acoustic monitors in the Gulf of Maine to listen for right whale calls. DMR has also regularly watched for right whales on dedicated voyages and flights on, and over, the Gulf of Maine.

Woods Hole and Maine DMR are deploying gliders to listen for whales. The gliders trail underwater and can not only detect whale calls, but detect particular whales if their calls are in the data set. When a right whale is detected, the glider can surface and broadcast a signal to let the scientists know its location. Technology is improving to be

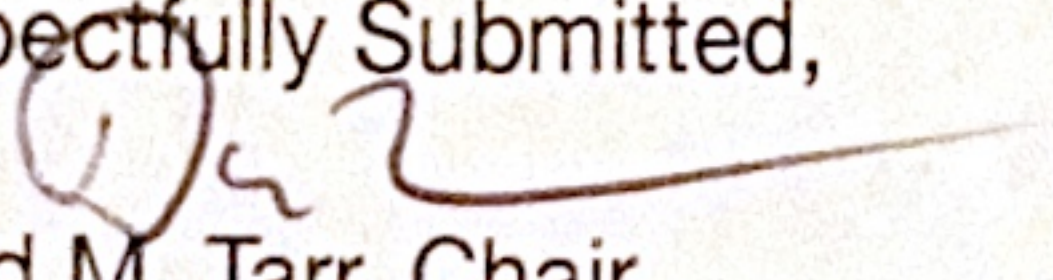
able to attach tags on whales to help track them. The data that is being collected will be invaluable to whale management. It will only improve over time.

Maine fishermen want no harm to come to a right whale from our, or any, fishing practices. We need some stability in management. Maine lobstermen and dealers bring around one billion dollars in revenue to the State of Maine supporting countless families and businesses.

We strongly support extending the pause to 2035. It would allow regulators the time to make meaningful changes using the data that is improving everyday. Continued funding of this valued research should also be extended. It is our hope that the subcommittee will advance HR 9436.

The Lobster Advisory Council thanks you for considering this important legislation.

Respectfully Submitted,



David M. Tarr, Chair
Lobster Advisory Council, Maine