



MLA Highlights 2005-2006

PROTECTING MAINE'S WORKING WATERFRONT

The MLA believes that the fishing industry does not have a future if we do not save our working waterfronts. After more than 5 years of work, the MLA (working through the Working Waterfront Coalition) was successful in establishing two new programs to protect Maine's working waterfront.

Current Use Taxation: MLA members have strongly supported changing Maine law to allow working waterfront property to be taxed for what it is: working waterfront property, not at its potential value if it were developed. The MLA has pursued this since 2000, when we narrowly lost a Citizens referendum vote. As a founding member of the Working Waterfront Coalition, the MLA persevered and the current use tax program for working waterfront will finally be implemented in April 2007!

- November 2000: Constitutional Amendment to allow current use taxation for commercial fishing activities fails approval by Maine voters by less than 1%.
- Spring 2003: MLA is a founding member of the Working Waterfront Coalition and serves on its Executive Committee.
- March 2005: LD 299, which proposed a Constitutional amendment to permit the Legislature to allow for current use valuation of waterfront land that supports commercial fishing, passed the Legislature allowing the question to go to citizens referendum ballot.
- Fall 2005: MLA Executive Director serves as Chair of the successful Campaign to Save Maine's Working Waterfronts.
- November 2005: Question 7 passes allowing for Maine's Constitution to be amended so that working waterfront can be taxed at its current use, similar to programs in place for Maine's farm and forestlands.
- April 2006: LD 1972 "An Act to Preserve Maine's Working Waterfront" unanimously passes the Maine Legislature establishing the framework for current use tax for working waterfronts.
- April 2007: Current use tax program to be implemented by municipal officials under the guidance of the Bureau of Revenue Services.

Working Waterfront Access Program: The price of waterfront properties continues to escalate. When working waterfront property is put up for sale, buyers can not afford to keep the property "working" because the purchase price is too high. The MLA (through the Working Waterfront Coalition) advocated for the passage of a \$2 million bond to establish the Working Waterfront Access Program. This program provides matching funds to secure coastal waterfront land with the facilities, capacity, and services needed to support commercial fisheries businesses. This means that if the purchase price of a waterfront property is too high to keep the property working, funding is available to pay the price gap.

- Winter/Spring 2005: The MLA advocated for inclusion of funds in the state bond package to support and preserve Maine's working waterfronts.
- July 2005: The Maine Legislature included \$2million in the state's \$83 million bond package to be put out to voters in November citizens referendum ballot
- November 2005: Question 5 passed overwhelmingly by Maine voters to include \$2 million to be used to help purchase working waterfronts, as part of the Land for Maine's Future bond.
- April 2006 : LD 1930 which set up the framework for the Working Waterfront Access Program passed the Maine Legislature.
- July 2006: Maine Dept of Marine Resources and State Planning Office seek proposals to preserve working waterfront properties through this program.
- 2006 and 2007: Program will be implemented to preserve at risk working waterfront properties.

PROTECTING MAINE WATERS

MLA members have been concerned about the spraying of pesticides to control brown tail moth for more than 10 years. Of particular concern has been the aerial spray program, because lobstermen have observed the spray hitting their docks and the water. Also of concern is that the pesticides used to kill

brown tail moth can be dangerous to lobsters. Rather than continue to be reactive year after year to proposed spray programs, the MLA was proactive and submitted a bill to establish buffer zones to push pesticide spraying back away from the water.

- 1997: Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between state agencies established a small buffer zone for the aerial spray of Dimilin.
- 1990's to 2004: MLA attends various municipal meetings to advocate against aerial spray programs and the use of pesticides to control brown tail moth.
- March 2005: LD 1657 is introduced to the Legislature to establish buffer zones for spraying of pesticides to control brown tail moth. The bill seeks to push all spraying back away from the water. This bill was carried over and pending study on this issue by Board of Pesticides Control (BPC).
- Fall 2005: MLA attends all meetings and continues to advocate for spray buffers with BPC.
- Winter 2006: Maine Legislature passes landmark legislation establishing buffers zones to push dangerous spray applications back to 250 feet, requiring applicators to notify the state when they plan to spray for BTM in coastal areas, and requiring the state to conduct random monitoring of spray sites. This provision will sunset in 2007.
- Fall 2006 and beyond: MLA will continue to advocate for permanent protection of our marine waters from pesticide applications.

PROTECTING OUR BAIT SUPPLY

The MLA has been proactive on both the artificial bait issue and herring management. In 2005, the MLA put forward a bill to allow DMR to regulate the use of artificial baits to ensure some oversight of the types of products allowed in our fisheries. In response to this bill, the Legislature banned the use of hide baits with hair in January 2006 and provided the DMR some regulatory authority to control the use of artificial baits.

In 2005, the MLA urged the New England Fishery Management Council to support protecting the nearshore herring stock from midwater trawl gear which is thought to harm the sustainability of the stocks. MLA supported a ban on midwater trawlers in Area 1A during the summer months, allowing only purse seine gear to be fished in this area in an effort to sustain the herring resource over the long term. The MLA will continue to advocate for implementation of this provision in January 2007.

WORKING WITH CONGRESS

New Whale Rules

The MLA continues to push hard to ensure that the new whale plan is reasonable and allows the industry to continue to fish. The MLA continues to advocate for an inshore exemption area, for the development and use of low profile groundlines (rather than a complete ban on the use of poly groundlines) and we continue to test and advocate for the development of new rope technologies. The MLA is ready to respond in the appropriate manner when the whale plan is released to ensure that Maine lobstermen can continue to fish in an economically viable manner without putting whales at risk.

Shell Disease Research

The Maine Lobstermen's Association serves on the Executive Committee to help oversee a \$3million Congressional appropriation to conduct research on shell disease. Research will begin later this year.

MAINTAINING A STRONG VOICE

The array of issues facing Maine's lobster industry is vast, but the MLA is committed to keeping our membership informed and representing the interests of the lobster industry when it matters. To that end, the MLA remains active in many arenas including the ASMFC, Maine Fishermen's Forum, Maine Working Waterfront Coalition, Whale Take Reduction Team, Lobster Advisory Council, Maine Lobster Promotion Council, Lobster Zone Councils, Gulf of Maine Ocean Observing System (GoMOOS), Sea Grant Policy Advisory Committee, Gulf of Maine Lobster Foundation, Lobster Institute, among others.



MLA: Our Strength is in Our Numbers