

## Summary of LD 575: An Act to Improve the Enforcement of Maine’s Lobster Laws

The following summary is provided as a courtesy to explain the legislative changes made by LD 575. This bill was passed with an emergency preamble, and signed into law by Governor LePage on June 14, 2017. If you have any questions regarding the information below, please contact the Commissioner’s Office at 624-6553, or your Marine Patrol Division Office (Division I: 633-9595; Division II 667-3373).

- As a result of changes made by LD 575, the following offenses are all cause for license suspension, or in some cases, revocation. The suspension may be imposed following a conviction through the court, or through the administrative suspension process.
  - Theft - lobster related
  - Receiving stolen goods - lobster related
  - Obstructing a Marine Patrol Officer
  - Assaulting, criminal threatening, terrorizing, or stalking a Marine Patrol Officer or members of his/her household
  - Hindering apprehension or prosecution
  - Obstructing criminal prosecution
  - Arson - lobster related (mandatory suspension)
  - Aggravated criminal mischief - lobster related (mandatory suspension)
  
- Trap molesting is now a criminal (rather than civil) offense.
  
- Untagged gear of less than 25 traps is a civil offense; untagged gear in excess of 25 traps is a criminal offense.
  
- The following minimum and maximum license suspension lengths are specified for the violations identified in this table:

<b>Violation</b>	<b>First offense – Suspension length</b>	<b>Second offense – Suspension length</b>	<b>Third offense– Suspension length</b>
<b>Trap molesting</b>	Minimum 2 years Maximum 6 years	Minimum 2 years Maximum 10 years	Permanent revocation
<b>Over the trap limit</b>	Minimum 3 years Maximum 10 years	Permanent revocation	(NA – license already permanently revoked)
<b>Intentionally fishing sunken trawls</b>	Minimum 3 years Maximum 10 years	Permanent revocation	(NA – license already permanently revoked)
<b>Artificially removing the eggs from a female lobster</b>	Minimum 4 years; potential for permanent revocation	Minimum 4 years; potential for permanent revocation	Minimum 4 years; potential for permanent revocation
<b>Arson/destruction lobster boat</b>	Permanent revocation	(NA – license already permanently revoked)	(NA – license already permanently revoked)

- For any violation identified in the table above, the Commissioner may require the license holder to begin with a lower number of traps (minimum of 300) when they return to fishing (when the license suspension is over) and build back up to the Zone trap limit by up to 100 traps per year.
  
- For any violation identified in the table above, the Commissioner may require the license holder to install a tracker to provide vessel location, for a period of time up to the length of the license suspension. Costs associated with the equipment are borne by the license holder.