For or Against? A non-profit dilemma?

In case you didn’t know, the Maine State Legislature is currently in full swing of its 131st Regular Session, and will be until June 21, 2023. And like many non-profits, Maine Center for Coastal Fisheries is as focused as it can be on what happens in this law making entity that we have in the State of Maine, and that has the potential to change all of our lives in profound ways... for the good, or the bad. So it might come as a surprise to learn that when us non-profit folks are testifying in front of legislative committees, we are rarely in the groups of folks that identify as “for” or “against” bills, but instead are “neither for or against”, and identify ourselves in our testimony as people that can help inform the committee or help make a bill better by considering something that maybe they hadn’t before.

Why not take a position, you ask? It’s for at least a couple reasons, but the short of it is that non-profits usually see themselves as activists, as opposed to lobbyists. And there are even financial restrictions on how much money a non-profit can use to lobby... and even the term “lobby” can be open to interpretation. But whatever the reason for weighing in on legislation or not, or being for or against, the legislative process is important in our work, and its important in all of our lives whether we fish or not. So I will use this column today to encourage anyone out there to get involved. Google Maine State Legislature. Find out what bills are coming up for discussion and what committees you might be interested in. Sign up for updates from a committee. Talk to non-profits you align with and ask them how to get involved. Use your pen and use your voice and be part of the process.

And to end this on a high note, I will tell you about one bill (specifically, LD 344) that I did get to weigh in on this year and that MCCF supported and that has passed all of its committee hurdles to becoming a law. This law will create an Alewife Day in the state of Maine every year on the Saturday before Memorial Day. It was a refreshingly simple and non-contested bill that in this day and age, is a rarity. Thanks. And hope to see you all on Alewife Day!

Do you have a question about our fisheries? Send it to info@coastalfisheries.org or call 207.367.2708.

**Prices to Harvesters**

Lobsters: $7.15-$8.15/lb
Scallops: $13.00/lb
Diesel: $4.85/gal

(Prices in Stonington on 3/19/23)

**Oceanographic Buoy I-01**

44°6’10”N 68°6’44”W - Frenchboro
Water Temperature (50 meters): 41.5°F (Ave:38.71°F)
Source: www.neracoos.org