



April 17, 2023

Dear Representative:

On behalf of the Maine Lobstering Union (MLU) Local 207 of the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers (IAMAW), **I write to express our opposition to H.R. 1213, the Restoring Effective Science-based Conservation Under Environmental laws protecting Whales Act of 2023 and urge you to oppose this harmful legislation.** If it were to become law, this legislation would cripple the vitally important lobster fishing industry in the state of Maine, obliterate the livelihood of thousands of hard-working men and women working in the industry and reap havoc on the Maine economy across the state.

Regulations imposed on the American lobster fishery to protect North Atlantic right whales by the National Oceanic Atmospheric Association (NOAA) and the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) have threatened the ability of Maine's lobstermen to earn a living. This industry is deeply rooted in Maine's history where families have passed down this trade for generations. In addition to the impact on the lobster fishermen themselves, this legislation would eliminate thousands of lobster fishery related jobs throughout the state and would seriously harm the state's tourism and export economies.

In December of 2022, Congress rightly acted to pause the impact of these harmful, kneejerk regulations in order that credible scientific information could be collected and reviewed. Currently there is zero evidence that any Maine fishing gear has entangled a single right whale since 2004, when Maine lobstermen adopted a wide range of mitigation measures to avoid such entanglements. Maine is the only state on the Atlantic Coast in which lobsters can be safely and sustainably harvested, year-round, without endangering, threatening, entangling or harassing the endangered right whale. This is true because the impact of climate change has pushed the right whale's food source into deeper, cooler waters outside the fishing area. There are also no mating/breeding grounds for the endangered right whale in Maine's territorial waters. For these reasons, there is no co-occurrence of right whales within twelve (12) miles of the Maine coast at any time of year.

This legislation, H.R. 1213, would roll back the prudent action Congress took in December 2022, and once again put this entire industry in existential peril. While I am certain that proponents of this legislation believe they are doing the right thing and acting to protect this endangered mammal, it is clear that not one right whale will be protected by this legislation because these whales do not use these waters off the coast of Maine. It is however quite clear that the legislation would in fact do direct harm to the men and women of the lobster fishing industry and the economy of the state of Maine.

For all of these reasons, **I strongly urge you to oppose H.R. 1213, the Restoring Effective Science-based Conservation Under Environmental laws protecting Whales Act.**

If you have any questions, please contact Legislative Director Hasan Solomon at [hsolomon@iamaw.org](mailto:hsolomon@iamaw.org) or (202) 420-5902.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Robert Martinez, Jr." The signature is written in a cursive style with a small circle above the letter 'i' in "Martinez".

Robert Martinez, Jr.  
International President