



# Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

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## MEMORANDUM

July 11, 2016

**To: American Lobster Management Board**  
**From: Law Enforcement Committee**  
**RE: Maine Trap Tag Transferability Program**

At the May 2016 meeting of the Law Enforcement Committee (LEC) of the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC), members heard a presentation and update on Maine's pilot trap tag transferability program. The following were in attendance:

*LEC: Capt. Steve Anthony (NC); Deputy Chief Kurt Blanchard (RI); Deputy Chief Jon Cornish (ME); Lt. Mike Eastman (NH); Asst. Director Larry Furlong (PA); Special Agent-in-Charge Honora Gordon (USFWS); Capt. Jamie Green (VA); Wayne Hettenbach (USDOJ); Bob Hogan (NOAA GC); Capt. Tim Huss (NY); Capt. Rob Kersey (MD); Capt. Bob Lynn (GA); Capt. Doug Messeck (DE); Maj. Pat Moran (MA); Director Kyle Overturf (CT); Lt. Colby Schlaht (USCG); Capt. Rama Shuster (FL); Lt. Jason Snellbaker (NJ);*

*LEC ALTERNATES: Jeff Ray (NOAA OLE)*

*OTHER ATTENDEES: David Borden (RI); Rene Cloutier (ME); Pat Keliher (ME)*

*STAFF: Mark Robson; Megan Ware*

During the meeting, representatives from Maine presented an update and summary information regarding their pilot trap tag transfer program that was implemented for the previous year. The LEC first heard about the pilot program during their October 2014 meeting. At that time the LEC was on record as being generally opposed to such transfer allowances, but was willing to assess the outcome of the Maine pilot program and determine if they could endorse such a system going forward.

During the review of the pilot program results at the May 2016 meeting, LEC members heard about the various advantages of the tag transfer system over the previous system of providing "exchange tags" to fishermen who bring traps back to shore and replace them with new gear. As reported by the Maine representatives, the tag transfer program has provided better accountability, allowed tags to be attached with secure hog rings, and continues to rely on extensive inspection of traps on the water and at the dock. Over a 12-month period, Maine Marine Patrol found that "...none of the very few untagged gear violations involved any evidence or indication that a trap limit violation existed." Maine Marine Patrol also believes eliminating production of over 20,000 exchange tags has helped alleviate existing problems of counterfeit tags, further improving accountability of tags and traps in the fishery.

LEC discussion centered on the fact that other states may have different requirements for issuing and replacing tags, and each state should be allowed the flexibility to utilize exchange-tags or to allow trap-to-trap transfer of original tags as they deem necessary. With that caveat, the LEC agreed by consensus to endorse the Maine tag transfer program.