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JOINT RESOLUTION SUPPORTING FEDERAL FUNDING FOR MARKETING AND PROMOTING SEAFOOD PRODUCED IN THE UNITED STATES

WHEREAS, the Maine Legislature, in partnership with the lobster industry, established in statute the Lobster Promotion Council, funded by lobster license holders, to market and promote the sale of Maine lobster to customers worldwide; and

WHEREAS, effective marketing of Maine lobster requires a constant, consistent and long-term marketing presence, especially in times of oversupply and new competition, in order for Maine lobster to reach a greater market; and

WHEREAS, the Maine lobster industry has paid for promotional activities to provide the greatest return on the investments made by lobster license holders; and

WHEREAS, the Maine lobster industry has made the most cost-effective use of a limited promotional budget; and

WHEREAS, despite the money raised within the lobster industry in Maine, the Lobster Promotion Council's promotional activities are often limited and underfunded; and

WHEREAS, in times of economic collapse or oversupply of lobsters, the lobster industry in Maine is not in a position to increase marketing assessments to raise more funds; and

WHEREAS, the Federal Government collects approximately \$280,000,000 annually through customs laws regulating the importation of seafood products, many of which compete with Maine's lobster products; and

WHEREAS, funds collected from the importation of seafood products are not available for the domestic marketing of American seafood; and

WHEREAS, using seafood product import revenues to market American seafood will preserve American fishing and seafood processing jobs, will preserve United States processing capacity and will ensure the availability of domestic seafood for the American consumer; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED: That We, the Members of the One Hundred and Twenty-fourth Legislature now assembled in the Second Regular Session, on behalf of the people we represent, take this opportunity to express our support for the use of a portion of federally generated seafood product import revenues for the domestic marketing and promoting of Maine lobster; and be it further

RESOLVED: That suitable copies of this resolution, duly authenticated by the Secretary of State, be transmitted to Governor John E. Baldacci.