



September 27, 2024

To: National Fish and Wildlife Foundation

From: Greenhead Lobster

Re: Electronic Monitoring and Reporting Grant Program 2024

To Whom it May Concern:



Greenhead Lobster supports the project "Implementing Market Transparency and Lobster Sourcing Strategies to Encourage Transition to On-Demand Gear (ME/MA/NH)" submitted to the 2024 National Fish and Wildlife Foundation Electronic Monitoring and Reporting (EMR) Grant Program. As a partner in this project, we understand that the lobster industry has a unique challenge on its hand: how we ensure reduction in entanglement risk of the North Atlantic right whale, while minimizing the economic impacts these changes will have on the fishery and the supporting industry. This project takes an immediate data driven and strategic approach to provide transparency of spatial and temporal fishing and whale maps. After the industry has a chance to review spatial and temporal whale maps overlaid with fishing occurrences, they can then work proactively to plan transitions in areas of risk. The project uses the size and centralized nature of the market participants to support and reward harvesters for reducing entanglement risk through electronic traceability and advanced marketing techniques that can be used to direct market the program to restaurants/retailers and consumers.

This team of industry experts has developed a project that uses transparency of entanglement risk by date and area. By using electronic traceability, the project will be able to promote products with lower right whale entanglement risk and tell the unique story of the harvesters' efforts. The ability to trace products to the marketplace effectively allows seafood buyers to source products selectively from areas of lower risk to the critically endangered right whale. Specifically, the project will use spatial and temporal maps overlaid with fishing areas and historical right whale detections and integration of a traceability program to encourage avoidance of right whale entanglement.

Greenhead lobsters are harvested by a dedicated fleet of Stonington, Maine lobstermen and women, many of whom have been delivering their daily catch of lobsters from the waters of Penobscot Bay to the Greenhead Lobster docks for generations, carrying on the strong fishing heritage of their families and this small island community located in the Gulf of Downeast Maine.

Greenhead Lobster supports this effort of an industry driven plan to reduce entanglement risk while minimizing economic impacts on the fishery participants.

Sincerely,

 President, Greenhead Lobster 

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