



**CITY OF NEW BEDFORD**  
JONATHAN F. MITCHELL, MAYOR

February 3, 2025

Robert Beal  
Executive Director  
Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission  
1050 N. Highland Street, Suite 200 A-N  
Arlington, VA 22201

Re: Repeal of Addendum XXVII

Dear Mr. Beal:

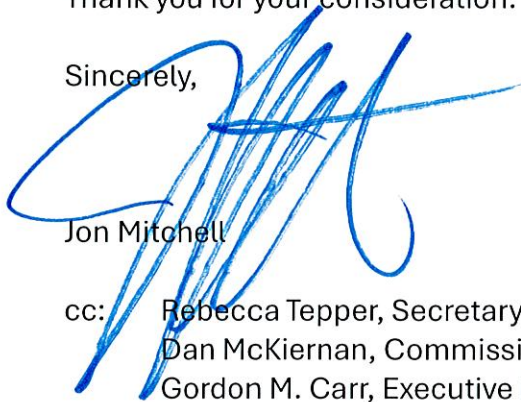
As mayor of America's top commercial fishing port, I write to urge the ASMFC to repeal Addendum XXVII concerning lobster gauge size, which is set to go into effect in July. The Commission instead should take more time to work with members of the industry to identify alternate approaches that could achieve the same sustainability goals without putting lobster fishermen at a competitive disadvantage to their Canadian counterparts or otherwise jeopardizing the viability of their businesses.

It is widely accepted that the lobster fishery has experienced declining catches in recent years in the Gulf of Maine, and I agree that some conservation steps should be taken. However, those efforts should be based on recent findings from the ongoing stock assessments, rather than the outdated information that underlies the current proposal. Further limiting size of lobsters that U.S. fishermen can catch now would likely have negligible effect, since Canadian lobstermen are not subject to the ASMFC regulations and will be able to harvest lobsters that would be out of reach for our domestic fishermen. Canadian caught lobsters would still be sold in the U.S. market. The current proposal will put our fishermen at a massive competitive disadvantage and has the potential for changing the market share of our fishermen for generations to come.

Members of the lobster industry face considerable challenges including environmental changes, regulatory restrictions, and other financial pressures. In Massachusetts, annual lobster landings are nearly \$100 million, making it the state's second highest valued fishery. The consensus in the industry is that lobster fishermen would face a dramatic and immediate reduction in their catch if the regulation is imposed, with an estimated loss of 30%-40% of their annual income – an impact that may permanently drive some out of business. I submit that the ASMFC should listen to lobstermen and work with them on alternatives that would be far less draconian and far more effective at sustaining the fishery and the fishermen in the long term.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'Jon Mitchell', with a large, sweeping flourish that extends to the right and loops back down.

Jon Mitchell

cc: Rebecca Tepper, Secretary of Energy & Environmental Affairs  
Dan McKiernan, Commissioner, MA Division of Marine Fisheries  
Gordon M. Carr, Executive Director, New Bedford Port Authority  
New Bedford State Legislative Delegation