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### **HARPSWELL WHARF RETAINED FOR COMMERCIAL FISHING**

**Harpswell, Maine — December 9, 2010**— An important wharf in the Harpswell fishing community is the latest project to be protected under the state’s Working Waterfront Access Pilot Program (WWAPP). The wharf had been owned by Bob and Marolyn Bibber since the mid-1970s and has been known locally as “Bibber Lobster.” The wharf was purchased by Jim Merryman, a Harpswell lobstermen with deep roots in the fishing community.

Located at the end of Ash Point Road on the Harpswell peninsula in Cumberland County, the 0.40 acre property includes 160 feet of deepwater shorefront with all–tide access. The property includes a residential house, which will now be offered as a seasonal rental unit to help generate income to support the property. Retail sales of lobster from the facility will continue as it has for years. The property is currently utilized by five lobster boats and in addition to serving as a buying station, will provide the following services to its patron boats: diesel fuel; bait; freezing/cooling space; and parking. The property has been well maintained over the years by the Bibber family. Merryman hopes to utilize the facility to its maximum potential to allow better access for fishermen to unload lobsters and provide more storage space in the tanks for live product. Merryman said, “The facility is well designed to help eliminate exposure and handling of product which in the end will reduce shrinkage and waste. There is space for five boats to berth at one time and two boats can offload at the same time.”

Working waterfront access in Maine has dwindled in recent years as the value of properties on the water has risen. Bob and Marolyn Bibber wanted to sell their property but wanted to be sure that it ended up in the hands of the fishing community. Bob Bibber said, “I’m glad things worked out the way they did. Jim is a bright, hard worker and I can’t think of a better person to take over the facility. I’m sure he will improve the property and serve the Harpswell fishermen well as I have done over the years.”

In exchange for an agreement to place a restrictive covenant on the property to keep the facility available for commercial fishing use in perpetuity, the WWAPP awarded Jim Merryman \$145,750 toward the purchase price of the property. Marine Recourses Commissioner George Lapointe said, “Harpswell has one of the highest concentrations of commercial fishing on the Maine coast. “This was an important property to protect and retain for the fishing community.”

The WWAPP is jointly administered by the Land for Maine’s Future Program (LMF), the Maine Department of Marine Resources and Coastal Enterprises, Inc. Increasing interest in the program from working waterfront

property owners supports estimates that there are approximately 100 commercial fishing properties on the Maine coast that remain unprotected. These properties are critically important to much of coastal Maine's reliance on fishing for economic prosperity. The recent November 2 bond referendum (Question #3) has recapitalize the WWAPP program with an additional \$1.75 million and the state expects to solicit proposals for new projects in early 2011. For additional information on the WWAPP visit the website, [www.wwapp.org](http://www.wwapp.org)

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