

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

September 22, 2017

Ms. Lisa Moore
Chair, Unicode Technical Committee
The Unicode Consortium
P.O. Box 391476
Mountain View, CA 94039-1476

Dear Ms. Moore:

I write today to express my support for advancing the Draft Candidate emoji with the proposed CLDR short name “lobster” to Final Candidate status, so that it may be included in the forthcoming update of the Unicode Standard to Version 11.0. The members of the Unicode Technical Committee (UTC) know better than most that emoji have become an increasingly important medium for communication, and that individuals and businesses have benefitted from being able to use a growing set of emoji options. And people in Maine—as well as others across the world—understand that the lobster is a culturally- and economically-important animal. In fact, the lobster catch in Maine alone was worth more than \$500 million in 2016ⁱ and there is significant demand for lobsters in North America, China, Italy, and the Republic of Korea.ⁱⁱ With these considerations in mind, I respectfully request that the UTC include the Draft Candidate lobster emoji in Unicode Version 11.0, so that people who fish, process, serve, eat, or otherwise admire the lobster can accurately express themselves in emoji form.

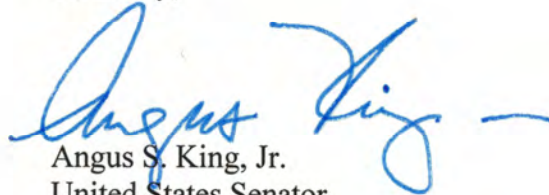
Three existing proposals to the Unicode Consortium have already provided the UTC with substantial evidence of the need to include a lobster emoji in the Unicode System, and I commend the authors for their efforts.ⁱⁱⁱ Building on their work, and in line with the Consortium’s selection factors, I would like to add a few points of my own. First, we can expect frequent usage of a lobster emoji. Not only is the lobster of substantial cultural relevance (e.g., the U.S. Senate unanimously designated September 25, 2017 as National Lobster Day,^{iv} the U.S. President served lobster at a state dinner honoring the Chinese President,^v and lobster has been featured in internationally-recognized TV shows and pop songs^{vi}), but statistics from leading online platforms indicate a public interest in lobster equal to that of the most closely-related emoji, the crab. The figures below illustrate this fact by detailing the ratio of usage of lobster-related terms to crab-related terms in web searches and on Instagram.

Google Trends: “lobster” v. “crab”	Google Trends: “lobster emoji” v. “crab emoji”	Instagram hashtags: “#lobster” v. “#crab”
103 percent ^{vii}	92 percent ^{viii}	119 percent ^{ix}

Second, it would be worthwhile for the UTC to add a lobster emoji because no existing emoji accurately capture the species, it would complete a set of emoji representing crustaceans commonly consumed as food items, and it would respond to significant public demand. Regarding the first issue, neither the existing crab nor shrimp emoji can be effectively used to represent a lobster, which has a distinctively different profile. Further, a search on Twitter^x or Instagram^{xi} for “#NoLobsterEmoji” reveals thousands of examples of likely users of a new character, as does a petition on this issue that over 4,000 people have signed.^{xii} A new lobster emoji would fill a necessary and unique void in the current Emoji List, and, should it be added, appears destined for significant usage by lobster fans around the world.^{xiii}

I would appreciate your consideration of this request, among the many other important items under review by the UTC, so that users on Unicode-supporting platforms may have access to a lobster emoji starting in mid-2018. Should you have any questions about this letter, please direct your staff to contact Will Woodworth in my office at 202-224-5344.

Sincerely,



Angus S. King, Jr.
United States Senator

ⁱ Trotter, Bill. 2017. Bangor Daily News. July 1. Accessed September 7, 2017.

<http://bangordailynews.com/2017/07/01/politics/u-s-house-panel-votes-to-keep-funding-marine-research-program>.

ⁱⁱ Overton, Penelope. 2017. Portland Press Herald. July 9. Accessed September 8, 2017.

<http://www.pressherald.com/2017/07/09/shadow-markets-mask-the-size-of-chinas-demand-for-lobster> ;

<http://www.fao.org/in-action/globefish/market-reports/resource-detail/en/c/1028890>

ⁱⁱⁱ <http://www.unicode.org/L2/L2017/17267-lobster-emoji.pdf>; <http://www.unicode.org/L2/L2017/17217-lobster-emoji.pdf>; <http://www.unicode.org/L2/L2014/14174r-emoji-additions.pdf>

^{iv} <https://www.congress.gov/115/bills/sres221/BILLS-115sres221ats.pdf>

^v <https://twitter.com/ObamaFoodorama/status/647080514713722881>

^{vi} <https://www.bustle.com/articles/23107-hes-her-lobster-a-friends-dictionary-to-help-you-interpret-ross-rachel-and-the-whole-gang>; https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rock_Lobster#Chart_performance

^{vii} <https://trends.google.com/trends/explore?date=all&q=lobster,crab>

^{viii} <https://trends.google.com/trends/explore?date=all&q=lobster%20emoji,crab%20emoji>

^{ix} Number of search results (on 9/7/17) for <https://www.instagram.com/explore/tags/lobster> divided by number of search results for <https://www.instagram.com/explore/tags/crab>

^x <https://twitter.com/search?q=%23nolobsteremoji>

^{xi} <https://www.instagram.com/explore/tags/nolobsteremoji>

^{xii} <https://www.change.org/p/unicode-consortium-let-s-make-the-lobster-emoji-happen>

^{xiii} https://trends.google.com/trends/explore?q=lobster&date=all#GEO_MAP