



# 132nd MAINE LEGISLATURE

## FIRST SPECIAL SESSION-2025

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Legislative Document

No. 1680

H.P. 1115

House of Representatives, April 17, 2025

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**An Act to Establish a Permanent Ferry Oversight Committee to  
Ensure Sustainable and Equitable Ferry Operations**

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Reference to the Committee on Transportation suggested and ordered printed.

  
ROBERT B. HUNT  
Clerk

Presented by Representative EATON of Deer Isle.  
Cosponsored by Senator GROHOSKI of Hancock and  
Representatives: ANKELES of Brunswick, BISHOP of Bucksport, CROCKETT of Portland,  
FRIEDMANN of Bar Harbor, GEIGER of Rockland, MATLACK of St. George, RAY of  
Lincolnville, Senator: TEPLER of Sagadahoc.

1       **Be it enacted by the People of the State of Maine as follows:**

2           **Sec. 1. 5 MRSA §12004-J, sub-§22** is enacted to read:

3           **22.**

4       Transportation Ferry Oversight Committee

Legislative Per  
Diem and  
Expenses

23 MRSA  
§4408

7           **Sec. 2. 23 MRSA §4408** is enacted to read:

8       **§4408. Ferry Oversight Committee**

9           The Ferry Oversight Committee, established in Title 5, section 12004-J, subsection 22  
10 and referred to in this section as "the committee," is an independent committee and shall  
11 provide continuous oversight of ferry operations and serve as a legislative mechanism for  
12 ensuring accountability and transparency around key decisions that affect unbridged island  
13 communities.

14       **1. Membership.** The committee consists of 10 members appointed as follows:

15       A. One member of the Senate who serves on the joint standing committee of the  
16 Legislature having jurisdiction over transportation matters, appointed by the President  
17 of the Senate;

18       B. One member of the House of Representatives who serves on the joint standing  
19 committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over transportation matters, appointed  
20 by the Speaker of the House;

21       C. Two members of the Maine State Ferry Advisory Board under chapter 411, each of  
22 whom represents an island municipality or plantation served by the Maine State Ferry  
23 Service, appointed by the chair of the Maine State Ferry Advisory Board;

24       D. Two members who are not members of the Maine State Ferry Advisory Board  
25 under chapter 411, each of whom represents an island municipality or plantation served  
26 by the Maine State Ferry Service, appointed by the Governor; and

27       E. Four members with expertise in relevant infrastructure, emergency services,  
28 economic development and education, appointed by the Governor.

29       **2. Terms of appointment; vacancies.** Members of the committee are appointed for  
30 2-year terms. A member may serve multiple terms. Members of the committee may serve  
31 after the expiration of their terms until their successors have taken office. A member  
32 appointed to fill a vacancy prior to the expiration of the term for which the member's  
33 predecessor was appointed serves only for the remainder of that term and must be appointed  
34 by the same appointing authority. Legislative members serve terms commensurate with  
35 their terms of office.

36       **3. Chair.** Annually, the committee shall elect a chair from among its members.

37       **4. Meetings; quorum.** The committee may meet as often as necessary but must meet  
38 at least quarterly. A majority of the members constitutes a quorum.

39       **5. Duties.** The committee shall:

A. Review proposals submitted by the Department of Transportation related to ferry operations, including berthing changes. The committee shall submit a report of a review under this paragraph to the joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over transportation matters; and

B. Examine the effects of changes in ferry services on student access to education, emergency service response, service reliability and the economic vitality of island communities and submit a report by December 31st of each year to the joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over transportation matters with findings and recommendations.

**Sec. 3. Staggered terms.** Notwithstanding the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 23, section 4408, subsection 2, of the initial non-Legislator appointments to the Ferry Oversight Committee, 4 members must be appointed to one-year terms and 4 members to 2-year terms.

## SUMMARY

This bill establishes the Ferry Oversight Committee, which is an independent committee providing continuous oversight of ferry operations and serving as a legislative mechanism for ensuring accountability and transparency around key decisions that affect unbridged island communities.