

Members of the Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs and the Committee on Marine Resources, my name is Lanie Grant and I am an Able Seafarer with the Maine State Ferry Service. I'm writing this testimony on my own time to share information that may be helpful as it relates to your work on the biennial budget.

As I'm sure you're all aware, the MSFS has had a hard time recruiting and retaining qualified employees. I feel very strongly that the opportunity to create a Mate position for the MSFS is not only a way to retain current employees, but is also the only way to advance in the company. The creation of the Mate position is essential to gaining legitimate sea time for folks who work on deck. There had been an in-house program in the past but it wasn't backed by the USCG and wasn't very successful. The Mate position is the only way to qualify to sit for Captain/Master of vessel position here at the MSFS so at the moment, the Able Seafarer position is a dead end job. Currently, retention and recruitment are hot words around here and we are still struggling to hire A/Bs (able seafarers). Maine Maritime Academy is sending out Mate's into the workforce each year and almost none of them look to the MSFS for employment. One major reason is that they can't get employed as Mate's and acquire the sea time they need to raise their grade and certifications.

I would like to see the MSFS create a Mate's position so that folks who work on deck can one day earn a Captain's license legitimately and remain employed in Maine and don't have to ship out to get that time on the water. The ability to find employees to work would be unlimited utilizing Mate's from MMA.

This is a topic I am very passionate about and if this issue is something you would like more information about, including the details about the position, average pay for Mate's in the US, and overall need, (specifically at the MSFS) I could discuss with you and I would be very happy to elaborate on if it seems a worthy discussion. My union, MSEA, can provide my contact information to the members of the Committees if you are interested.

Thank you for reading this.

Very Respectfully,

Lanie Grant