



SIERRA CLUB

MAINE CHAPTER

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To: Committee on Marine Resources

From: Ania Wright, Sierra Club Maine

Date: March 15, 2023

Re: **Testimony Neither for Nor Against, LD 487: An Act to Establish Coastal Waters and Submerged Lands Regional Planning Commissions**

Senate Chair Reny, Representative Chair Hepler, and members of the Marine Resources Committee, I am testifying on behalf of Sierra Club Maine, representing over 22,000 supporters and members statewide. Founded in 1892, Sierra Club is one of our nation's oldest and largest environmental organizations. We work diligently to amplify the power of our 3.8 million members nation-wide as we work towards combating climate change and promoting a just and sustainable economy. To that end, we are testifying today neither for nor against LD 487: An Act to Establish Coastal Waters and Submerged Lands Regional Planning Commissions.

We would like to emphasize the need for regional planning for our coastline. Communities know their environment best, and with over 3,478 miles of coastline in Maine, with highly varied bays, estuaries, islands and inlets, it is vital for communities with lived knowledge to have power in determining what is appropriate for our waters. We appreciate the intent of LD 487 to give regions control over important issues not considered in State regulations.

However, we recognize the concerns over determining the best mechanism for coastal communities to have a direct say in the use of their shared waters. We support local participation through regional/ecosystem based planning and hope more specifics on planning areas can be clarified. All our water bodies should have community voices involved in their stewardship.

We encourage the Committee to work with the citizens who developed this bill to find a way forward for regional planning for our coastal waters. Due to the vast diversity of our coastline, the future of our coastal communities and their livelihoods is dependent on localized solutions. Sierra Club will remain very interested in this and will monitor it closely and plan to weigh in again if possible in light of what the committee decides to do about the various issues that will be noted in the public hearing and work session. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Ania Wright

Legislative and Political Specialist

Sierra Club Maine