

**City of Portland | City Council** Kate Snyder, *Mayor*



**To:** Joint Standing Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs

**From:** Mayor Kate Snyder, City of Portland

**Date:** 04/25/2023

**Re:** LD 1480

### **Testimony in Support of LD 1480**

#### **“An Act to Protect Union Wharf and Sustain Maine's Maritime Industries”**

Senator Rotundo, Representative Sachs, and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs:

I write to you on behalf of the City of Portland’s Legislative/Nominating Committee in Support of LD 1480, *An Act to Protect Union Wharf and Sustain Maine's Maritime Industries*.

For nearly 40 years, the City of Portland has strived to preserve a working waterfront in the center of Maine’s largest municipality. Through innovative land use regulations, tax increment financing, collaborations with public and private entities, and direct municipal investment in infrastructure, the City has maintained an active and vital port despite dramatic challenges. Increases in coastal property values, development pressures, climate change, and disruptions to traditional fisheries are day-to-day and long term threats to the viability of the working waterfront.

Most of Portland’s waterfront is privately owned, and the waterfront’s pier owners and property managers have been and remain critical partners in this effort. Since their arrival on the Portland waterfront over 20 years ago, the Gulf of Maine Research Institute (GMRI) has partnered in efforts to preserve the businesses and properties that define our working waterfront. Their stewardship became even more important since their acquisition of Union Wharf.

Union Wharf holds a unique place on the Portland Waterfront. Union Wharf is the largest privately-owned commercial pier in the Central Waterfront; home to more commercial marine businesses than any other private pier in Portland Harbor; designed and maintained to support both traditional and emerging marine industries; and centrally located adjacent to the Portland Fish Pier, creating a critical mass of protected marine properties in the heart of the harbor and the City.

In short, Union Wharf is critical private infrastructure for the marine economy and its continued commitment to fisheries and emerging marine uses has regional significance. GMRI's commitment to preserve marine industrial access is a remarkable achievement in the face of extraordinary development pressures and escalating coastal property values.

Please support LD 1480 to help ensure that future generations of Mainers will have access to marine opportunities in Portland Harbor.

Thank you for your consideration.