



April 26, 2023

To: Transportation Committee

RE: LD1177 -An Act to Assess a Slip Fee on Megayachts

Thank you for hearing my testimony opposing LD1177. I am respectfully submitting a position summary for your convenience and clarity. I am Vanessa Pike; I manage Fore Points Marina in Portland. We have 150-boat slips that accommodate local and visiting vessels from under 20 feet to 500+ feet long. 12 slips are dedicated to megayachts (vessels 100+ feet), so we have an understanding of this market and customer.

Maine is a new and growing destination for megayachts. We spend a lot of time educating captains and charter brokers about the area as a premier destination to visit. A focus area is Newport, Rhode Island, a relatively nearby hub for megayachts. They have no dockage tax and an ample inventory of customers seeking new adventures.

But why do we care or want to lure them to Maine? We care because of the economic impact they generate for our neighbors. For our local community. One customer said they spend an average of \$100,000 a week in any port.

When yacht guests are on board, the guests spend money in town on dinners, activities, and entertainment. When the guests are away, the crew spends money in town on dinners, activities, and entertainment. The yachts replenish at each port. They patronize local businesses. For example, a florist in town replaced all their covid-canceled wedding business with decorating yacht interiors. A transportation business hired an additional driver just to service the yacht clientele at our marina.

I do not have a firm statistic on total yacht spending in the state. I do however, have a key to the marina where we let in a myriad of businesses that generate revenue providing products and services to these yachts. Just to name a few of our regulars:

- Harmons & Barton's Floral
- Pratt Abbott Cleaners
- VIP Charters
- Atlantic Limo
- Lady Catherine Lobster
- Harbor Fish
- Browne Trading
- Summerfeet Cycling
- Bow Street Beverages
- Diver Lou
- Sea Tow
- Casco Bay Diesel
- Portland Yacht Services
- Maine Yacht Services
- Hamilton Marine

- DiMillos
- Hallett Canvas
- Rinaldi Fuel – family-owned business that we buy tens of thousands of gallons of diesel

A tax, one that they are not paying in their home port, or many others, and one that compounds so quickly as suggested in this bill, is not welcoming. It targets them specifically and sends a message we do not want their business. It is not as simple as alleging “tax havens” and “they can register in the US” – these are global entities employing people from around the world with maritime laws and legalities to follow. They are not going to change their flag to visit Maine. They just won’t come to Maine.

They can go anywhere in the world; and while we try to entice them to spend their money here, we are at an unfair advantage to the plethora of other ports that are more welcoming. This “tax” will have the opposite effect of its intention. Rather than generating revenue for the state, it will decrease visitation and take money directly away from hard working small businesses and all those they employ.

Thank you for considering the negative ramifications a bill such as this would have on our communities.

Vanessa Pike

Vanessa R. Pike
General Manager
Fore Points Marina
vpik@forepointsmarina.com
207-229-9777