

March 5, 2024

To: The Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs

RE: LD 2225 -An Act to Provide Funding to Rebuild Infrastructure Affected by Extreme Inland and Coastal Weather Events

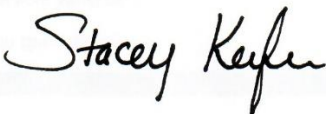
Senator Rotundo, Representative Sachs, and members of the Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs, my name is Stacey Keefer, Director for the Maine Marine Trades Association (MMTA). MMTA represents over one hundred Maine companies including boatyards, boat builders, marinas, boat dealers, and marine retailers. Our members provide marine products and services for both the recreational and commercial sectors.

We sincerely appreciate Speaker Talbot Ross' sponsorship and President Jackson's co-sponsorship of the Governor's bill, LD 2225. It is going to take years for our coastline to recover from the environmental, economic, and historic storm and tidal damage that Maine experienced this winter. These funds are desperately needed to help our communities restore critical infrastructure with the intention to be more prepared for future extreme weather events.

Our association is working with other associations and state agencies to figure out where we can lend support, but funding is the first and largest hurdle to clear to get our working waterfronts fully and efficiently operating again. Maine's fisheries have faced so many challenges in recent years, especially increasing pressures of coastal gentrification. But our heritage industry is still viable -- with new opportunities emerging, but we need to prioritize preservation of their extremely limited coastal infrastructure. Commercial fishing and farming are economically important on their own, but their products and cultural appeal are also a huge draw of our tourism industry.

On behalf of the members of MMTA, we hope you consider supporting the funding as proposed in LD 2225.

Respectfully,



Stacey Keefer
Maine Marine Trades Association, Executive Director

