

Alexis Miller
Cottage Connection
LD 283

Senator Grohoski, Representative Cloutier, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Taxation:

My name is Alexis Miller, and I am the Experience Curator for Cottage Connection of Maine and am the second generation in our family business. I'm here today to express my strong opposition to LD 238, "An Act to Expand Local Revenues by Including Meals and Lodging Sales Tax Revenue Under the State-Municipal Revenue Sharing Program."

Our business is deeply rooted in Maine's tourism industry, and I am concerned that this bill will create unfair competition among our towns. The attitude in Maine has always been that a rising tide lifts all ships, but this not-really local option sales tax, I fear, will make more communities try to put holes in other people's boats than it will help raise the tide. That, in turn, will harm our collective success. Furthermore, I am concerned about the potential impact on the Maine Office of Tourism's advertising budget, which is crucial for our state's tourism promotion. The Maine Office of Tourism's data shows a 9% drop in visitors from 2023 to 2024, indicating a need for increased, not decreased, support. There is already so much stress on the tourism industry in Maine, especially as many of us gear up for the all-important summer season. Do we really need to add another stressor on top of all that?

In summary, I oppose LD 238 because it threatens to disrupt the collaborative nature of Maine's tourism industry and potentially weaken our state's marketing efforts. I urge the committee to reject this bill and instead focus on policies that support a unified and thriving tourism sector for all of Maine.