

**Senator Rotundo, Representative Gattine, and members of the Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs,  
Senator Talbot Ross, Representative Pluecker, and members of the Committee on Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry,**

I am writing this testimony to express my strong support for protecting and expanding funding for the Executive Branch salary plan in LD 210. I submit this testimony on my personal time as a dedicated public servant committed to the stewardship of Maine's natural resources.

As an Assistant Park Ranger on the Allagash Wilderness Waterway, my career began years ago at a small state park in southern Maine, where my starting wage was significantly lower than the \$15 per hour currently offered to Step 1 employees. Today, my role on the Allagash requires a high level of technical skill and physical endurance. On any given day, I independently patrol roughly 10 miles of challenging waterway, maintain and hike several miles of trails, repair and clean facilities, maintain essential equipment, respond to emergencies, enforce regulations, and engage with the public—all while maintaining an approachable professional appearance and a positive attitude. Given the remote and demanding nature of this work, I must stay in peak physical condition while living in primitive conditions for nine consecutive days at a time, working 12-hour shifts.

Beyond the physical and psychological demands of this role, simply reporting for duty requires significant personal investment. My duty station is 35 miles or over an hour from my home, requiring travel on private North Maine Woods-managed logging roads in my personal vehicle. Last season alone, this commute resulted in approximately \$850 in damage to my vehicle's suspension and steering—nearly one week's salary—just to get to work. Other rangers with longer commutes have faced even greater hardships, including broken frames and multiple tire punctures.

Despite the deep passion my colleagues and I share for protecting the waterway and Maine's public lands, current compensation does not reflect the level of skill, responsibility, and dedication required for this work. As many of my coworkers and predecessors have said, we do not take on these roles for the pay, but out of love for the outdoors. However, passion alone does not pay the bills. I have watched talented colleagues—many of them friends—leave these positions because they simply cannot afford to stay. Many find better-paying opportunities in the private sector or in other states where similar roles offer more competitive wages. Given the technical expertise and life skills necessary for success in this field, recruiting and retaining qualified candidates has become increasingly difficult once they fully grasp the job's demands.

Personally, I remain hopeful that wages will increase to align with compensation offered in other states and at the federal level for comparable roles. To paraphrase a supervisor, **"I have seen many good rangers come and go. I wish I could have paid them what they were worth or, at the very least, been able to offer them full-time positions."**

Visitors to the Allagash Wilderness Waterway—and to Maine's public lands as a whole—expect a safe and memorable experience. They rely on knowledgeable, well-trained, and skilled rangers for guidance, safety, and assistance, whether that means offering critical advice or simply providing a dry match on a rainy day. The only way to attract and retain the employees necessary

to fulfill this mission is by offering competitive compensation, quality training, and clear opportunities for career advancement. Achieving these goals requires sufficient funding.

I urge you to support and expand funding for the Executive Branch salary plan in this biennial budget to ensure the continued protection of Maine's natural resources and the safety of the visitors who enjoy them.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Adam Raven', written over a horizontal line.

**Adam Raven**

Assistant Park Ranger