



New England Fishermen's Stewardship Association
500 Southborough Dr. Suite 204
South Portland, ME 04106
April 9, 2025

Joint Standing Committee on Taxation

c/o Legislative Information Office
100 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333

RE: Letter of Support for LD 1368 – An Act to Provide a Property Tax Exemption for Landowners Who Allow Access to the Intertidal Zone for Shellfish Harvesting

Dear Senator Grohoski, Representative Cloutier, and Honorable Members of the Committee on Taxation,

On behalf of the New England Fishermen's Stewardship Association (NEFSA), I write to express our strong support for **LD 1368**, "An Act to Provide a Property Tax Exemption for Landowners Who Allow Access to the Intertidal Zone for Shellfish Harvesting."

NEFSA is a non-profit organization dedicated to preserving the working waterfronts, traditional fisheries, and cultural heritage of New England's coastal communities. We work on behalf of fishermen and fishing families to ensure sustainable access to the ocean and protect the rights and viability of those who make their living from the sea. We represent thousands of marine harvesters and the communities they depend upon, across all of New England.

As access to the working waterfront continues to dwindle across Maine due to coastal development and shifting property ownership, shellfish harvesters—many of whom rely on the intertidal zone for their livelihood—face increasing barriers to the very resources they depend on. **LD 1368 addresses this critical issue by creating a tax incentive for landowners who choose to support Maine's coastal economy and heritage by allowing responsible access to the intertidal zone.**

This bill strikes a meaningful balance between private property rights and the public interest by encouraging cooperation and stewardship. At a time when access points are being lost at an alarming rate, LD 1368 offers a proactive, voluntary solution to safeguard one of Maine's oldest and most iconic professions—shellfish harvesting.

Supporting this legislation is fully in line with NEFSA's mission to ensure a future for New England fishermen. When shellfish harvesters lose access to the shore, we lose not only jobs and small businesses, but also a vital part of our shared identity and economy. The preservation of

intertidal access is essential to sustaining Maine's fishing communities and the marine ecosystem stewardship they provide.

We urge the Committee to support LD 1368 and help ensure that Maine's shellfish harvesters retain access to the intertidal areas they need to work and survive. Thank you for your thoughtful consideration and continued support of Maine's coastal communities.

Respectfully submitted,

Dustin W. Delano
Chief Operating Officer
New England Fishermen's Stewardship Association