

Testimony of the Maine Municipal Association

In Conditional Opposition to

LD 1368, *An Act to Provide a Property Tax Exemption for Allowing Shellfish Harvester Access to the Intertidal Zone*

April 9, 2025

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Senator Grohoski, Representative Cloutier and members of the Taxation Committee, my name is Kate Dufour, and I am providing testimony in conditional opposition to LD 1368, until MMA's Legislative Policy Committee establishes the association's official position at its April 16 meeting.

The feeling among the policy committee members participating in a poll on LD 1368 is that while the approach is well-intentioned there are avenues currently available to address the issue being raised. Chief among the options are easements and enrollment in a current use program, both of which are designed to provide a reduction in assessed value in recognition of the encumbrance placed on the property. Additionally, there is nothing that would prohibit an owner from allowing people to cross private property in exchange for payment, which could then be used to pay property taxes.

There was also concern raised with the provision of the bill making the submitted plans related to the benefit confidential. Municipal leaders believe that the public should be made aware of the reasons a person is benefiting from a property tax exemption.

Since there are other options available, there is no need to extend benefits to one class of property taxpayers, which results in the costs of the benefit being shifted to others in the community.

Should MMA's official position on this bill vary from the testimony provided above, staff will submit supplemental testimony for the committee's consideration.

Thank you for your time and consideration of the municipal perspective on this issue.