



23 April 2025

The Honorable Denise Tepler, Senate Chair
The Honorable Allison Hepler, House Chair
Joint Standing Committee on Marine Resources
Cross Building, Room 202
Augusta, ME. 04333

Senator Tepler, Representative Hepler, Honorable members of the Joint Committee on Marine Resources:

My name is Elizabeth (Liz) Michaud. I was born, raised, and educated in Maine. I am currently a part-time resident of Lubec, Maine and the president of the pending Maine non-profit organization, Green and White Hope, Inc. Most importantly for this committee, I am the aunt of Tylar Michaud, the 18-year-old fisherman who was lost while lobster fishing off Petit Manan on 21 July 2023. Tylar's buoy's were green and white and this nonprofit is my way of turning a tragedy into a movement that aims to **bring every fisherman home**. Green and White Hope's mission is to prevent fatalities among commercial fishermen through safety programs and technology advancement, while also advancing recovery capabilities in support of our Maine communities that rely on the sea; so it likely comes as no surprise that I am before you today in support of LD1708, An Act to Create the Commercial Fishing Safety Fund to Further Develop Training and Provide Equipment to Recover Ships and Other Watercraft.

From personal experience, the Maine Department of Marine Resources, and specifically the Maine Marine Patrol, was outstanding in support of our family while we combed the shoreline and searched from air and sea, along with the fishing community, across **30 calendar days**. Their dedication and perseverance was without question. Unfortunately, in the community's eagerness to help (they had positive intentions, **we are sooo grateful for them**), Tylar's traps and boat had been moved and threw off the DMR's ability to accurately triangulate his last known location. This undoubtedly extended any timeline of us finding or recovering him. 30 days was agony, but we were blessed to finally find him, others are not so lucky.

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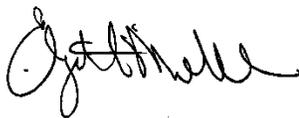


I share this as an example of where additional funding could be used to ensure there is well understood command and control and a series of actions to be taken, and potentially drilled in each Maine harbor, so that our community resources can be used most effectively in search, rescue, and recovery missions. It is a well understood fact that the Coast Guard will never reach most of the state of Maine harbors with their cutters or aircraft until it's too late. They encourage the community to be educated and ready to save each other and that is hard to do with the limited funding that the DMR currently has available to address commercial safety education and capabilities.

In my role establishing this new non-profit, I can also testify to the incredibly dedicated people across the state of Maine and beyond, committed to advancing commercial fishing safety; The Maine Center for Coastal Fisheries, Maine Coast Fisherman's Association, Fishing Partnership Support Services, McMillian Survival Training, REDDE, etc. etc. There are 10's of people to address 1000's of fisherman and their families on commercial fishing safety topics. That is not enough and sadly their efforts (education, PFD distribution, etc.) are at risk due to the governmental changes. We are more and more on our own to protect and bring our fisherman home. Commercial fishing is the 2nd most dangerous profession, next only to logging, and there is a sense among the community that the risks will rise as more and more commercial fisherman decide to fish alone to improve their economics. Fishing alone also has some unique traits that require education that currently doesn't exist, if it did, it may have saved Tylar's life.

LD1708 can't promise to address all the issues across commercial fishing safety, but it will make a statement that the issue is important and provide an avenue for the department to receive dedicated funds to fill gaps in education and equipment that the State funding can't address in these times. I commend Representative Strout and Senator Moore for bringing this forward and encourage the support of the committee. Thank you for your time today and for the important work you're doing to preserve our fisheries and fisherman in the great state of Maine.

Respectfully submitted



Elizabeth (Liz) Michaud

President and Founder

Green and White Hope, Inc (*pending legal incorporation*)