

Senator Rafferty, Representative Murphy, and other members of the Education and Cultural Affairs Committee:

My name is Pamela Proulx-Curry, I am Chair-elect of the Governor's Commission on Community Service and Volunteerism and I live in Old Town. I am submitting written testimony today in support of LD 1433 - Resolve, to Establish a Working Waterfront Infrastructure Engineer Corps Pilot Program and to Conduct a Feasibility Study of a Higher Education Service Corps Program.

I am an Analytical Chemist and have served as Assistant Professor of Chemistry at the University of Maine at Machias and Associate Professor of Chemistry at Unity College. I have also served as Academic Dean at Eastern Maine Community College and Dean of the Bangor Campus and Assistant Provost for Community Outreach & Development at the University of Maine at Augusta. I also served as Executive Director of the Wisconsin Campus Compact, a non-profit organization whose mission was to promote, and help build capacity for, community-based learning and research in Wisconsin's colleges and universities, and as a Program Director for the Maine Campus Compact. My knowledge of, and experience with, Service Learning and Community Based Research is fairly extensive.

Having involved my own students in service learning through a variety of community projects, I can attest to the effectiveness of service learning as a teaching method. The application of theory to real-world problems results in a truly deep learning experience for the student. It is equally valuable to the community. Many communities, especially small rural ones, often do not have the capacity to conduct, or the resources to hire contractors to conduct, studies that have the potential to significantly impact community planning and/or provide significant community improvements. Service learning is a win-win proposition for both students and the communities they serve. The establishment of a Working Waterfront Infrastructure Engineer Corps Pilot Program has the potential to provide University of Maine Students with deep learning experiences that will not only prepare them to be effective and productive workers, but will also help establish important community connections and inculcate an ethic of service in Maine's rising young professionals. The Program will also provide waterfront communities with invaluable and necessary information for effectively dealing with the ever-increasing threats posed by climate change.

In the last few years many small communities have incurred severe damage to their waterfront infrastructure during what are becoming increasingly frequent and severe storms. As atmospheric temperatures continue to rise these threats will only increase. The proposed program will help provide these communities with vital information to help mitigate the effects of these severe weather events. I urge to take advantage of the ready resources of the University to assist coastal communities in meeting these challenges by passing LD 1433. Thank you.