

Jessica Joyce  
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LD 1433

Honorable Senator Rafferty, Representative Murphy and esteemed members of the Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs,

My name is Jessica Joyce, and I am a small business owner from Freeport. I have spent over 20 years working in public policy focused on fisheries policy, coastal community climate adaptation and working waterfront. I am writing to support LD 1433. This past year, my business, Tidal Bay Consulting, had a contract with the Maine Coast Fishermen's Association (MCFA) through a storm response grant they held with the State, funded by a FEMA disaster recovery grant (through the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration) for responding to the January 2024 storms. MCFA was selected to support the fishing and working waterfront communities whose infrastructure was devastated by the coastal storms. In this role, I worked with working waterfront owners and members of the fishing industry in 12 municipalities in mid-coast Maine, and my colleagues covered other towns and regions. We helped these individuals access resources for rebuilding as well as referred them to other social services.

The number one issue we encountered was eligibility for existing storm rebuilding funds and/or limited availability of funds. The second issue we encountered was a lack of engineers to support getting an accurate assessment of damage, a construction proposal for bidding, and cost estimates. Not only were the engineers booked out months or years, but these services were also incredibly expensive. A Working Waterfront Infrastructure Engineer Corps Pilot Program would directly address this gap, and support more efficient rebuilding after future storms as well as generally resilience upgrades to mitigate other impacts of climate change such as sea level rise.

A third issue was a backlog of available marine contractors to do the work, which this bill does not directly address but it does indirectly address as a step towards rebuilding and/or renovations for resilience.

The State of Maine has an incredible opportunity in the coming years with federal funding coming down the pipeline from a NOAA grant to GOPIF as well as funding Senator Collins appropriated for working waterfront rebuilding and resilience. If enacted and implemented, LD 1433 will serve a critical need for the fishing and aquaculture industries in Maine and our marine economy, as working waterfronts are rebuilt.

Thank you for consideration of this testimony.  
Jessica Gribbon Joyce