

April 27, 2025

Senator Tim Nangle, Chair
Representative Lydia Crafts, Chair
Joint Standing Committee on Transportation
Augusta, Maine 04333

Re: ***LD 1477, An Act to Provide an Exemption from Pilotage Requirements for Passenger Ferry Service Between Bar Harbor, Maine and Yarmouth, Nova Scotia***

Dear Chair Nangle, Chair Crafts, and Members of the Transportation Committee:

I am writing to respectfully request that the Transportation Committee **STRONGLY OPPOSE** LD 1477 An Act to Provide an Exemption from Pilotage Requirements for Passenger Ferry Service Between Bar Harbor, Maine and Yarmouth, Nova Scotia.

I am Captain Hugh Mitchell, and I have owned and operated the charter fishing and harbor tour vessel "LiveLiner" out of South Portland, Maine since 2014. I spend nearly every day on Maine's coastal waters from mid-May through mid-October. **I cannot express the importance of the role the state licensed pilots play in keeping Maine's waters safe.** 365 days a year, 24 hours a day, the state of Maine relies on, and holds accountable, these experts, to ensure a variety of commercial vessels do not cause harm to our coast and its users. There is no mariner or navigator with greater expertise or a higher level of ship handling experience. Equally as important, state pilots are most in tune with who and what types of other vessels are using the channels around them.

I recall many foggy days in Casco Bay, when "The Cat" would arrive at full speed to the pilot station, finally slowing down upon request of the pilots for the boarding transfer. It is highly concerning to think that a vessel capable of such speeds would be considered for an exemption to its greatest safety asset, the state pilots. It is also concerning that any shipping company would prioritize cost savings over safety. I am querying whether the proposed bill would inspire other companies to seek similar exemptions, companies with even larger vessels like cruise ships and tankers that also operate between Maine and Canada, even more regularly than a seasonal ferry. Regardless of a shipping company's prerogative, **the passage of this bill would set the dangerous precedent that Maine does not value the highest standards of safety for vessels entering its ports.**

For the reasons above, I respectfully request that the Committee vote **ought not to pass on LD 1477.** Thank you for your time and consideration in keeping Maine's waters safe.

Sincerely,

Hugh Mitchell

Captain Hugh Mitchell
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