

KLOPP MARINE SERVICES

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April 29, 2025

Senator Tim Nangle
Senator Lydia Crafts
Committee on Transportation
Augusta, Maine 04333

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

Dear Members of the Transportation Committee:

My name is Captain Mark Klopp, Bath Iron Works Shipyard Captain, and I write to express my strong opposition to LD 1477. LD 1477 seeks to prioritize economic benefits to one company by exempting their vessels from Maine’s long-standing laws requiring the services of state-licensed sea pilots. If LD 1477 were to pass, Maine’s ports and harbors will be more at risk of accident harming people, property, and the environment.

By way of background, I am also one of only two federal and Maine State licensed pilots for the Kennebec River, and my primary work in this river is assisting Bath Iron Works in navigating their vessels in and out of their facility in Bath.

Bath Iron Works is Maine’s fourth largest employer and builds state of the art warships for the United States Navy. Once a ship is complete, before the U.S. Navy takes ownership, BIW conducts several “sea trials”. My responsibilities as Shipyard Captain include acting as Master aboard the vessel while underway. Additionally, when a BIW ship transits the Kennebec River, it is required to have a licensed pilot aboard during the entire transit, and I serve in this role. The Kennebec is one of Maine’s most difficult and challenging pieces of pilotage, it takes many years and numerous transits to obtain pilotage proficiency for the Kennebec.

Turning to LD 1477, changes to Maine’s current pilotage law that grant exemptions puts the safety of all Maine ports at a great and unnecessary risk. If an exemption is granted to one company, what would stop other shipping companies calling on Maine ports to ask for the same exemption? Sure, an exemption would save vessels money, but it would reduce safety for our ports and put the exempt vessels at risk as well.

There is good reason that Maine waters are protected by pilotage law, like other coastal ports throughout this country. Every ship, foreign flag and U.S. flag sailing under register (engaged in foreign transit) is subject to compulsory pilotage requirement. Most shipping companies are

prudent with safety and adhere to the requirement to utilize a pilot. However, Bay Ferries has consistently sought to exempt itself from pilotage laws in Maine. In 2018, Bay Ferries attempted to get this Legislature to allow their service to be exempted from Maine's pilotage laws, and the Legislature at that time rejected the effort. We hope the Maine Legislature once again rejects this effort by Bay Ferries to exempt itself from Maine's important pilotage laws.

Thank you again for the opportunity to provide testimony on this bill, and we urge the Committee to unanimously oppose LD 1477. Safety in Maine's ports demands such action.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mark W. Klopp". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Captain Mark Klopp,

Master Unlimited
Bath Iron Works, Shipyard Captain
Unlimited First Class Federal Pilot, Kennebec River
Maine State Pilot, Kennebec River
Unlimited First Class Federal Pilot, Portland Harbor
Maine State Pilot, Portland Harbor