



New England Fishermen's Stewardship Association
500 Southborough Dr. Suite 204
South Portland, ME 04106

April 15, 2025
Senator Tim Nangle
Representative Lydia Crafts
Committee on Transportation
Maine Senate and Maine House of Representatives
2 and 3 State House Station
Augusta, Maine 04333

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

Submitted by the New England Fishermen's Stewardship Association (NEFSA)

Dear Senator Nangle, Representative Crafts, and Members of the Transportation Committee,

The New England Fishermen's Stewardship Association (NEFSA) respectfully submits this testimony in strong opposition to LD 1477.

NEFSA is a bipartisan, non-profit organization representing thousands of fishermen across the New England region. We are united in our mission to protect and preserve the future of America's wild fisheries, advocating for sustainable management, ocean stewardship, and food security through responsible harvesting practices. Our membership is composed of hardworking fishermen and their families who depend on the health and safety of our marine waters to make a living and contribute to the nation's seafood supply.

This proposed legislation undermines the safety protocols that are essential to the continued coexistence of commercial fishing and high-speed ferry operations in Maine's coastal waters. Maine fishermen, particularly those operating in and around Frenchman Bay, already take extensive precautions to safely set and monitor their gear in the presence of fast-moving vessels such as the Bay Ferries "Cat." These efforts are made possible in part by the critical role of state-licensed pilots, whose local expertise ensures that large vessels navigate safely and responsibly through Maine's complex and heavily used waterways.

Exempting any vessel from pilotage requirements—especially one operating at high speeds through busy, gear-dense fishing grounds—poses an unacceptable risk to the safety of commercial fishermen and all maritime users. It also sets a dangerous precedent for commercial vessel oversight in our state. The loss of local pilot guidance could lead to increased gear

conflicts, marine accidents, and long-term damage to the trust and coordination that currently exists between industries sharing these waters.

As an organization dedicated to balancing ecosystem sustainability, economic well-being, and the working waterfront, NEFSA views LD 1477 as a direct threat to our mission. We respectfully urge the committee to vote **Ought Not to Pass** on LD 1477.

Thank you for your time, attention, and commitment to the safety and sustainability of Maine's coastal communities.

Dustin W. Delano
Chief Operating Officer
New England Fishermen's Stewardship Association

Dustin Delano
NEFSA
LD 1477

Attached you will find the opposing written testimony from the New England Fishermen's Stewardship Association. Board member Jason Joyce will speak on our behalf at the hearing.