



Senator Nangle, Representative Crafts, and members of the Transportation Committee, my name is Jeff Romano, providing testimony today on behalf of Maine Coast Heritage Trust (MCHT) in support of LD's 1231 and 1731.

It is not often that MCHT testifies before this committee. Our organization focuses on land conservation efforts, especially along the Maine coast and does not typically weigh in on transportation policy. However, for decades MCHT has worked with many of the island towns served by the State Ferry Service, including Frenchboro, Swans Island, North Haven, and Vinalhaven.

Through our conservation work in Maine's island communities, it has become clear that the long-term health and stability of each is dependent on a state-run ferry service that is responsive to their needs. There are many proposals before the committee this year that would be positive steps in that direction, including LDs 1231 and 1731.

MCHT encourages the committee to support both bills and to work closely with Maine's island communities to find a path forward that successfully balances their needs and that of the state.

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*Maine Coast Heritage Trust seeks to advance the conservation of lands and waters in Maine to ensure ecological wellbeing and foster thriving communities. Over the past five decades, we have conserved more than 185,000 acres, including over 160 places open for traditional outdoor recreation.*