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Marine Towing, Salvage, and On the Water Services
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April 29, 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 Senator Nangle, Representative Crafts, and members of the Transportation Committee, my name is Parker Poole IV, and I would like to speak about a very important piece of the safety of Maine's harbors. I spend most of my time on the ocean, most of this time coming and going from Portland Harbor in a variety of different roles to a variety of other ports along the coast of Maine. As the owner and operator of Determination Marine, LLC a Marine Towing, Salvage and Marine Services company, a part time captain and deckhand for Portland Pilots, a commercial fisherman, and a recreational boater in any free time I may have, these varied rolls give me a very unique perspective on the events going on along the Maine coast on a daily basis. I think there are very few people that can see so many different sides of the comings and goings in Maine's harbors as myself. I **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, for a number of reasons similar to why I opposed similar ferry exemption legislation by the same entity nearly eight years ago. I hope you will take the time to read this and understand why I oppose LD 1477.

In my time off the pilot boat, aboard my own vessel and other vessels, the level of security provided by the state pilots being aboard any large vessels coming into the harbor is one that I would not like to see disappear, and I think most of the people working on the water would agree. Being able to clearly and easily communicate with the local pilot and the captain of the pilot boat to make passing arrangements is a huge safety item for everyone involved not just aboard my vessel but also the passengers and crew of the larger ships. When towing a disabled vessel into the harbor in reduced visibility dealing with the same local pilots day in and day out makes my job much safer. We are usually towing disabled pleasure craft back into the harbor for repair after they have run aground, sunk or become disabled, and when doing this we have relatively limited maneuverability. Being able to clearly and concisely make arrangements to pass the Cat or any other merchant vessels calling on Portland with a local pilot that we deal with day in and day out brings a huge amount of accountability and safety to the game. I see and hear firsthand from other fishing vessels that work the harbor, all of the interactions with the pilots

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and fishing boats. The local pilots know every fishing boat and commercial vessel regularly operating in the channel and know the various working channels of most of them. This safety net would be lost if LD 1477 is passed

During my time on the pilot boat, I see firsthand the benefits that having not only the pilot aboard the ship, but also the safety that is provided by the pilot boat being able to run interference for the incoming or outgoing vessel. On a daily basis, especially in the summer with the current ferry schedule overlapping with peak recreational boating times, we interact with the countless kayaks, sailboats, powerboats, and commercial vessels that are operating in Portland harbor and surrounding waterways. On a normal day with plenty of visibility we will stand by off the dock the ship is leaving from and block traffic from interfering with the vessel pulling on or off the dock and into the channel. We will then run out ahead of vessel we are escorting in or out. Should there be any traffic in the channel that looks like it could pose a threat to the vessel we are working with, we will make attempt to make contact with that vessel on the radio. If we fail to establish communications with the infringing vessel, which is often the case with recreational boats that are not monitoring channel 16 or other hailing channel we will pull up alongside and instruct them to stay clear of the vessel we are working with. We will also make contact with any lobster boats that are working the ship channel and request they clear out of the way or at least just let them know that a vessel is coming in or out and they should monitor it.

On the frequent foggy days in the summer with reduced visibility our job gets a little more challenging and important. We will once again standby off the dock and block any traffic from interfering with the incoming or departing vessel, allowing the pilot to concentrate on safely docking or undocking. Once the vessel is clear of the dock we will jog out in front of the vessel. This time we will be looking for any radar returns for vessels large or small that appear to be in the path of our vessel. We will usually head towards them to make a visual contact. Most of them know what we are there for when we pull out of the fog and are quick to call and tell us they are aware of the ship coming out and they will be on their way momentarily. We also jot the name of the vessel down and pass it along to the pilot aboard the ship immediately on a working radio channel. They can see us on their AIS (Automatic Identification System) and plot which radar target we are near, this gives them the name and information needed to make contact and make passing agreements should they need to. Some people are surprised and not so eager to see us pop out of the fog but these are the people we need to be making contact with to keep from becoming a casualty. I can distinctly remember one such time while sailing the M/V Alakai (the Cat) from Portland harbor on a foggy afternoon with reduced visibility. We were just out past Portland headlight approaching the Delta buoy in the middle of the channel headed towards the Cod Ledges and the southern approach to Portland. We had a very faint target on the radar in the channel and decided to run down and check it out even though it was probably nothing. Upon getting there we came out of the fog to see an older gentleman in 36' lobster boat that was not equipped with any radar. He was very startled but knew exactly why we were there. He beat us to the punch, immediately asking us which way we wanted him to go and how long he had till the

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vessel got to his location. We provided him with the necessary information and told him to head to the east and we would make sure that the ferry passed safely clear of him. At this point we called the Pilot aboard the M/V Alakai and explained that we had a lobster boat that barely showed up on the radar at our current location which he could clearly see displayed on AIS and we had instructed him to head to the east and stay there until the ship was safely past. The fisherman and his crew were both thankful for our being there and waved as we continued our trip out to the sea buoy to disembark the pilot. This is an almost daily occurrence when there is fog during the summer.

This is why I do not support LD 1477, An Act to Provide an Exemption from Pilotage Requirements for Passenger Ferry Service Between Bar Harbor, Maine and Yarmouth, Nova Scotia and request that the members of the Transportation Committee **unanimously oppose LD 1477**. It is shortsighted and unsafe to remove the local pilot requirements for large ferries. The port of Bar Harbor is a busy water way with a large variety of users ranging from safe, educated boat operators and some that are totally at the other end of the spectrum. I hope my insight from a few unique perspectives will help everyone to see exactly how much safety is provided by having the state pilots on any large vessel entering or leaving ports in Maine.

Thank you for your consideration- Parker Poole IV