



PORTLAND
Regional Chamber of Commerce

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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

Joint Standing Committee on Transportation
April 29, 2025

Senator Nangle, Representative Crafts and members of the Committee on Transportation,

My name is Eamonn Dundon, and I serve as the Director of Advocacy for the Portland Regional Chamber of Commerce. We represent 1,300 businesses across the region, collectively employing over 75,000 Mainers. I respectfully submit this written testimony on behalf of our organization in strong opposition to LD 1477.

While this bill may not directly affect Portland Harbor, we believe it sets a dangerous precedent that could undermine the safety and integrity of marine operations throughout Maine. Exempting specific vessels from pilotage requirements threatens the expertise and essential services provided by licensed sea pilots across our state—professionals who play a vital role in navigating Maine’s complex and increasingly busy harbors.

In Portland Harbor, we are fortunate to rely on the services of Portland Pilots Inc., a longtime Chamber member and trusted steward of harbor safety. The intricate choreography of vessel movements in Portland Harbor depends on skilled pilots to prevent accidents, protect our infrastructure, and ensure seamless maritime operations. Allowing certain vessels to bypass this system undermines the consistency and coordination necessary for efficient harbor management.

We understand that Bay Ferries currently receives a “preferential rate” for pilotage services in Bar Harbor, an arrangement not afforded to the many other commercial vessels that sustain Maine’s economy by transporting essential goods and commodities. Expanding exemptions for one operator not only creates an uneven playing field, but it also jeopardizes the economic model that supports the recruitment, training, and availability of licensed pilots statewide.

As vessel traffic continues to grow in Portland Harbor and beyond, the demand for experienced pilots is greater than ever. The Maine Pilotage Commission (MPC) already has the authority and technical expertise to set pilotage rules and rates through a transparent and rigorous process. Undermining this regulatory framework through legislative exemptions weakens both accountability and safety.

For these reasons, we respectfully urge the Committee to vote “Ought Not to Pass” on LD 1477. Thank you for your time, and for your continued dedication to safeguarding Maine’s maritime infrastructure for all who depend on it.