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My name is Andy Whitman, of Swan's Island, Maine, an island community served by the Maine State Ferry Service (MSFS). I'm providing testimony today in support of requiring MSFS ferries to be overnighed on the islands they serve. The DoT and MSFS are proposing to overnigh ferries on the mainland which will drastically impact island communities and their livelihoods.

First, this change would eliminate a critical round trip each day. Ferries starting and ending their day on the island ensure that residents can travel to and from the mainland in the early morning and late afternoon. Overnighing ferries on the mainland means the first trip to the island becomes positioning, not passenger service—stranding residents without early access to work, school, medical care, or connecting transport. On Swan's Island, this means an 1.5 hours off island every day is lost, making off island employment near impossible, and access to medical care incredibly difficult. Furthermore, students and their families already struggle to go to school and enjoy extra-curricular activities without added burden of staying off island or arranging other transportation. Overnighing the state ferry on the mainland only exacerbates this issue.

Second, this change would undermine the ferry's role as a lifeline during emergencies. When ferries are docked at the island overnight, they are available to transport emergency personnel, evacuate patients, and respond to critical needs. Without that presence, island residents lose precious response time in situations where every minute matters.

This proposal prioritizes operational convenience over community safety and access. The state's ferries are not just transportation—they are infrastructure, emergency response, and daily life support for islanders. Please preserve their commitment to the communities they exist to serve.