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**Testimony in Support of LD 1874-An Act to Enable the Maine Pilotage Commission to Oversee  
Pilots Operating in Portland Harbor**

Joint Standing Committee on Transportation  
May 14, 2025

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

I am Eamonn Dundon, the Director of Advocacy for the Portland Regional Chamber of Commerce. We represent 1,300 businesses in across region, collectively employing over 75,000 Mainers. I submit this testimony today on behalf of our organization to express our strong support for LD 1874, which will transfer jurisdiction over the licensure and ratemaking of sea pilots in Portland Harbor from the Portland Harbor Commission to the Maine Pilotage Commission.

**We recognize this change would shift an important responsibility from the Portland Harbor Commission (PHC), and we do not make this request lightly. However, we believe this transition will ultimately benefit the PHC, the pilotage system, and the broader Portland harbor community.**

This proposal would allow the Harbor Commission to concentrate its efforts on core areas of expertise—reviewing and approving marine construction permits, piers, dredging and moorings—while transferring the complex task of rate-setting to the Maine Pilotage Commission (MPC). The MPC currently oversees pilotage in every other Maine port and has developed the institutional capacity, legal support, and technical expertise necessary to manage this function effectively.

Last year's sea pilot ratemaking process before the PHC proved challenging for all parties. It led to a commissioner's resignation, operational threats from pilot shortages, and a series of emergency proceedings. We do not place blame for these outcomes, but we believe they underscore the need for a structure better suited to the demands of pilotage regulation. Shifting this responsibility to the MPC would offer greater transparency, accountability, and operational stability while freeing the PHC to focus on their critical responsibilities unique to Portland Harbor.

We have reviewed both the legislation and a potential amendment. Notably, the bill and the amendment contain several provisions that preserve the Harbor Commission's rules and expertise:

- It maintains all existing rules established by the PHC related to training, apprenticeship, and operational requirements for pilots that differ from those involved in other Maine ports;
- It retains the PHC's current standards for determining when sea pilots are required aboard vessels in Portland Harbor;
- A proposed amendment includes a Portland/South Portland seat on the MPC, ensuring continued representation of the region in these proceedings; and
- A proposed amendment includes the provision that rates set by the MPC must be "just and reasonable", in line with the PHC's current standards.

For these reasons, we urge you to vote "Ought to Pass, As Amended" on LD 1874. Thank you for your time and your dedication to serving all Mainers.