

Testimony of
Sarah Flink, Executive Director
CruiseMaine

Before
Joint Standing Committee on Transportation

In Support of
LD 1874 – An Act to Enable the Maine Pilotage Commission to Oversee Pilots Operating in
Portland Harbor

Chairpersons, members of the committee,

I submit this testimony on behalf of CruiseMaine in strong support of LD 1874 – An Act to Enable the Maine Pilotage Commission to Oversee Pilots Operating in Portland Harbor.

Cruise visitation is a vital component of Maine’s tourism industry and plays a significant role in the broader maritime economy. In the years following the COVID-19 pandemic, Portland’s cruise ship activity has grown rapidly. As of 2024, Portland has emerged as the busiest cruise port in the state of Maine.

Cruise lines routinely plan their itineraries two to three years in advance. A key requirement in this planning process is the availability of adequate and reliable pilotage services. Without assured pilotage, these operators cannot build or commit to viable cruise schedules that include Portland as a port of call.

The Maine Pilotage Commission has a strong track record of successfully overseeing all the other pilotage areas within the state, other than Portland Harbor. The state commission is made up of individuals with maritime and pilotage experience, and they are closely supported by the Maine DOT, a dedicated administrator, and legal support from the Maine AG’s Office. Expanding their oversight to include Portland Harbor will unify Maine’s pilotage system and create predictability, consistency, and clarity for pilots in Portland which in turn helps cruise operations across the state. This change is not only logical but necessary to ensure the continued growth and competitiveness of Maine’s cruise industry.

For these reasons, we respectfully urge the committee to support LD 1874. Thank you for your consideration.