

**TESTIMONY OF KEITH M. WILLIAMSON  
IN SUPPORT OF LD 1286  
Resolve, to Establish the Blue Economy Task Force to Support  
Maine's Emergence as a Center for Blue Economy Innovation and  
Opportunity in the 21st Century  
April 11, 2023**

Senator Curry, Representative Roberts, Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Innovation, Development, Economic Advancement and Business, my name is Keith Williamson Provost at Maine Maritime Academy in Castine. I am here today to speak in support of LD 1286.

We at Maine Maritime support the Blue Economy Task Force as a strategic approach to leverage the collective wisdom of experts from the major areas that will create jobs and ensure the safe and sustainable use of our ocean resources.

At Maine Maritime Academy (MMA), we pride ourselves on creating economic value for our students. We do this with a curriculum focused on learning outcomes that tie directly to practical demonstration of the skills that employers need to grow their businesses and maintain their competitive advantages. Every shipping company, every shipbuilder, and every business who hire our graduates look to us to provide graduate who are lifelong learners, are agile, and adapt to rapid changes in technology including ship's operational technologies and cyber related skills.

We look forward to contributing our unique perspectives to the Task Force, and we look forward to benefiting from the perspectives of others on the Task Force. As an example of what we anticipate, I look at our recent experience with Floating Wind Technology. This technology from UMaine's R&D efforts has opened the door for us at MMA to partner with Northern Maine Community College to create a vision for wind techs to work at sea. We've called this effort "marinizing" the wind tech workforce. We've also broadened the concept to other areas, as we know the concept will apply to electricians, welders, plumbers, and others seeking to work offshore in Maine's floating wind industry.

We anticipate similar opportunities from sensor technologies and cyber tools that are advancing smart ship technology and creating opportunities for cyber-mariners. We see these cyber tools trickling down from our 500 foot training ship to 50 foot vessels. In summary, the Blue Economy will be a landscape for new opportunities, and we know there will be challenges to unlocking those opportunities. Again, as I mentioned earlier, I believe the Task Force is a phenomenal way for us to bring our collective expertise together to identify the emerging technologies and workforce opportunities that will put Maine at the forefront of one of the fastest growing global economic sectors.

Thank you for your time and attention. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.