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TESTIMONY BEFORE THE JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON
AGRICULTURE, CONSERVATION AND FORESTRY

IN SUPPORT OF LD 2039

An Act to Make Changes to the Financial Authority of Maine (FAME) Board Composition to Allow for Proxy Designees

January 23, 2024

Senator Curry, Representative Roberts, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Innovation, Development, Economic Advancement, and Business, my name is Emily Horton, and I am the Director of Policy and Community Engagement for the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry (DACF). I am speaking in support of LD 2039, "*An Act to Make Changes to the Financial Authority of Maine (FAME) Board Composition to allow for Proxy Designees.*"

This bill adds language to 10 MRSA §965(4)(B) that currently describes the state members of the FAME board. The new language simply extends to the Commissioners of DACF and the Department of Marine Resources the same flexibility already granted to the Commissioner of Economic and Community Development to designate a proxy to attend and vote at board meetings as needed. This is a standard allowance embedded in statute for the vast majority of boards that these Commissioners serve on. From a practical perspective, Commissioners are obligated to serve on numerous boards, along with their many other responsibilities, and may not be able to attend all board meetings all the time. LD 2039 is a practical enhancement to the statute that allows the Commissioner's designee to attend by proxy and vote. This is an efficient and practical change, allowing the natural resource departments to be fully represented at these important board meetings when the Commissioner is not able to attend in person. This change does not make any changes to the public members who also hold board seats.

Thank you for your time. I would be happy to answer any questions.

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