

February 13, 2024

To: The Committee on Innovation, Development, Economic Advancement and Business

**RE: LD 2191 -An Act to Provide Relief to Small Businesses Affected by Severe Weather-related Events**

Senator Curry, Representative Roberts, and members of the Committee on Innovation, Development, Economic Advancement and Business, my name is Stacey Keefer, Director for the Maine Marine Trades Association (MMTA). MMTA represents over one hundred companies including boatyards, boat builders, marinas, boat dealers, and marine retailers. Our members provide marine products and services for both the recreational and commercial sectors.

We sincerely appreciate Senator Hickman's sponsorship of LD 2191 along with the bipartisan co-sponsors' support. In January the Maine coast suffered severe environmental, economic, and historic storm and tidal damage. In the weeks since the two significant storms we have learned about the massive challenges ahead for restoration of our working waterfronts, public infrastructure, and coastal communities. It is going to take years to recover and there is a risk that businesses may not survive if they cannot rebuild.

Our association is working with other associations and state agencies to figure out where we can lend support. During the early stages of damage assessment, we reached out to marine engineers and contractors about the rebuilding process. There appear to be significant hurdles for the survival of our working waterfronts including:

- **Funding:** federal loans may become available to assist some working waterfronts, but that funding may not be enough to help them build back with more resilient structure adaptations.
- **Permitting, Design and Engineering:** permits take time and engineers are too few and overloaded to handle the demand for resiliency redesign.
- **Contractors:** Maine has a limited number of marine contractors who can drive pilings for piers and construct wharves; many of them were booked with jobs 1-2 years prior to the storms.
- **Materials:** we do not know what the supply chain will look like over the coming months as demand for specialized marine construction materials increases.

We are looking at all of these hurdles as a potential pinch point for each and every affected business. On behalf of the members of MMTA, we would appreciate support for creating the Small Business Weather Emergency Relief Program as proposed in LD 2191.

Respectfully,  
Stacey Keefer  
Maine Marine Trades Association, Executive Director



The following list of MMTA members wish to be included in this testimony as additional supporters of the LD 2191. These businesses do not necessarily need any recovery funding but would like to see funding for those companies who do need assistance.

Bristol Marine/ Boothbay Harbor Shipyard, Boothbay Harbor

Brooklin Boat Yard, Brooklin

Derecktor Robinhood Marine, Georgetown

Front Street Shipyard, Belfast

Jeff's Marine, Thomaston

Great Cove Boat Club, Eliot

Kennebunkport Marina, Kennebunkport

Lyman-Morse Boatbuilding, Thomaston

Lyman-Morse Camden, Camden

Maine Boats, Homes & Harbors, Inc, Rockland

North Atlantic Inflatables, Brunswick

Ocean Pursuits, Rockland

Sunset Marina, Portland