



Senator Rotundo, Representative Sachs, and honorable members of the Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs,

My name is Virginia Olsen, I am a 5th generation lobsterman from Stonington, I now work for District 4 of the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers and am assigned to the Maine Lobstering Union. We support LD 2225. We also hope you will fund LD 2191 in its entirety. In Stonington, we had so much damage to our working waterfront. We are a small community with a large footprint in the fishing industry. Like so many other small towns we watched in horror as our docks and supplies floated away, as the equipment we use disappeared underwater and our fishing shacks crumpled into the sea. This has dire consequences for the fishing industry, be it lobster, scallops, clams, or aquaculture. The Maine Fishing Industry is one of the largest contributors to Maine's economy at \$3.2 billion. Funding to replace this infrastructure is greatly important to the economy, but I also want you to understand it is more than that. It is the very fabric of our communities. In Stonington fishing accounts for over 75% of the financial revenue to run our town, but these areas are also docks we have learned to fish from, swam at, and hold many generations of memories. Fishing has seen unprecedented increases in the cost of doing business. Without this financial support of LD 2225 commercial docks and personal docks will need to use the equity they have to acquire loans or their credit line which we depend on for them to purchase our harvest. This does not leave much meat on the bone for an industry whose profit margin is being squeezed over and over.

I want to stress that this appropriation rebuilds not only our working waterfront but makes our communities whole again.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you.

Virginia Olsen- District 4