

**Testimony of Patrick Keliher, Commissioner
Maine Department of Marine Resources**

**Before the Joint Standing Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs
and
The Joint Standing Committee on Marine Resources**

LD 209 "An Act to Make Supplemental Appropriations and Allocations from the General Fund and Other Funds for the Expenditures of State Government and to Change Certain Provisions of the Law Necessary to the Proper Operations of State Government for the Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2025."

Senator Rotundo, Representative Gattine, Honorable members of the Joint Standing Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs, Senator Tepler, Representative Hepler, and Honorable members of the Joint Standing Committee on Marine Resources, I am Patrick Keliher, Commissioner of the Department of Marine Resources. I am here today to testify on behalf of the Administration in support of LD 209, specifically the portions of the supplemental budget pertaining to the Department of Marine Resources (DMR).

BUREAU OF MARINE SCIENCE 0027

At the top of page A-37, the Bureau of Marine Science is requesting \$400,000 in one-time capital funding for restoration and repair work to the Department's Boothbay Harbor lab facility's piers and its Burnt Island Education Center caused by the January 2024 storms. These funds will also support improvements to this infrastructure that will make it more resilient to future weather events. This request would cover the department's portion of the obligation costs for the FEMA Public Assistance Program, which is 10% of the total anticipated award. As such, this investment leverages up to \$4 million in federal disaster recovery and mitigation funding.

BUREAU OF POLICY AND MANAGEMENT 0258

The first initiative within the Bureau of Policy and Management on page A-37 continues three limited-period positions to support the Maine Coastal Mapping Initiative through June 7, 2025. These positions collect critical bathymetric and habitat data that informs our overall understanding of the Gulf of Maine, and is

used for purposes ranging from habitat assessments to inform offshore development to updating charting and navigational tools.

MARINE PATROL 0029

On page A-38, the first initiative for the Bureau of Marine Patrol provides funding for increased fees for dispatch services provided by the Department of Public Safety (DPS). DPS calculates its fees by compiling records of dispatch calls and allocates a percentage of the costs to partner agencies. In recent years, dispatch costs have increased significantly. Dispatch service fees charged to the Bureau of Marine Patrol are projected to be \$12,037 higher in fiscal year 2025, a 21% increase over FY23.

This concludes the testimony of the Department of Marine Resources. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.