

**TESTIMONY OF THE
DEPARTMENT OF INLAND FISHERIES AND WILDLIFE
BEFORE THE JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON INLAND FISHERIES AND
WILDLIFE**

NEITHER FOR NOR AGAINST L.D. 153

“An Act to Prohibit the Unauthorized Mooring of Watercraft”

SPONSORED BY: Representative MILLIKEN of Blue Hill.

**CO-SPONSORED BY: Senator MOORE of Washington and
Representatives: BISHOP of Bucksport, DODGE of Belfast, EATON of Deer Isle, STROUT of
Harrington.**

DATE OF HEARING: February 10, 2025

Good afternoon, Senator Baldacci, Representative Roberts and members of the Inland Fisheries and Wildlife Committee. I am Dan Scott, Colonel for the Maine Warden Service at the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, speaking on behalf of the Department as well as Maine Department of Marine Resources (DMR) neither for nor against on **L.D. 153**.

This bill prohibits a person from securing a watercraft to a mooring without receiving permission from the mooring's owner or lessee and establishes penalties and exceptions to that prohibition. After checking with our warden service staff, we have received very few complaints about this activity on moorings in inland waters. This does not mean that similar complaints aren't fielded by town harbor masters or other town officials, and considering the large number of moorings on inland waters, I suspect these incidents do occur. That being said, the substance of the bill seems reasonable that a person who has leased or owns a mooring can expect it to be available when they arrive to use it. We have consulted with the Maine Department of Marine Resources (DMR) and they expressed similar thoughts. Both our Department as well as DMR want to note that if this law should pass, when any mooring violation of this nature is discovered and an ordinance in place, the first enforcement authority to be contacted should be the town official who enforces the mooring ordinance. On that note we also spoke with the Maine Harbor Master Association. They noted concern over the language within Sec 1 of the bill, that speaks to "permission being required". It states that "a person may not secure a watercraft to a mooring owned or leased by another person without permission of the owner or lessee". They feel this could be contradictory to many town ordinances and would preclude Harbor Masters' ability to enforce this law. If the Committee supports this, we suggest amending this section to add language that includes, "*or harbor master in the case of a mooring being located where a town ordinance is in place that regulates mooring leases*".

I would be glad to answer any questions at this time or during the work session.