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Testimony in support of LD 488

**“An Act to Protect Coastal Property by Allowing Property Owners to
Protect Their Existing Dwellings”**

February 24, 2025

Good morning, thank you for the opportunity to speak in support of LD 488. My name is Jean Andrews. In 2020 my husband inherited his childhood home in Camp Ellis.

My mother-in-law purchased her home in the early 70's, opened an art studio which later became the Grey Gull Gift Shop. Her business catered to the transient summer population that would come to the area to vacation but afforded her the opportunity to raise her two boys while participating in the local economy.

For those of you who have never visited, Camp Ellis is a special place, a working waterfront for the working class. My husband often reminisces about the wonderful time he had growing up, the opportunities to fish off the jetty, helping to construct the pier and making friends with the transient summer population that would come to the area to vacation. He often said, “every week brought new friends”.

In the 30 years I have been visiting Camp Ellis, there have been homes lost, local businesses have closed and summer visitors have slowed. The magic of the area is still there, the beauty remains, but it is ever changing. The beach where the sun bathers would come by the hundreds is disappearing and the quaint summer cottages have either been eaten by the sea, are threatened or have been sold to those who can afford to fortify and protect them. Many have replaced these

picturesque cottages with larger structures that are necessary but no longer convey or represent the coastal fishing community that was once Camp Ellis.

We have hired engineers and filed for permits trying to work within the system to come up with a solution that would save our home but no reasonable solution exists within the written rules.

I was optimistic in January to hear that Governor Mills and others introduced LD 1, "An Act to Increase Storm Preparedness and Resilience for Maine's Communities, Homes & Infrastructure". Though funding would be wonderful and beneficial for many, the real damage lies with various agencies lacking (and I quote from the Legislative Document) "up-to-date hydrological and sea level rise modeling data and are operating with outdated Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) maps".

The restriction and outdated rules that must be followed by these agencies, including the DEP, allow no room for interpretation or application to individual situations. If home and business owners in these coastal communities are not allowed opportunities to fortify their properties, the charm and coastal landscape that attract visitors to Maine will disappear into the sea and the economic impacts will be monumental. We need to revitalize these communities that have brought visitors to our coast for decades.

Camp Ellis along with its coastal charm offers so much potential to the Tourism industry in Maine. With the proposed changes to the Jetty, LD 488 and LD 228, it is my hope that Camp Ellis will once again thrive and continue to be a summer destination for the working class.

Thank you for your time and consideration, I ask that you support Bill 488 and the local economies of the working waterfronts of Maine.