



MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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April 2, 2025 - Testimony in support of LD 1168:

An Act to Amend the Law Regarding the Current Use Valuation of Certain Working Waterfront Land with Respect to Commercial Boat Yards

Good morning, Senator Grohoski, Representative Cloutier, and members of the Committee on Taxation. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. My name is Representative Billy Bob Faulkingham, and I serve as the House Republican Leader. I represent House District 12, which includes the towns of Franklin, Gouldsboro, Hancock, Sorrento, Sullivan, Winter Harbor, and Steuben.

I am here today to present testimony on my proposed legislation, ***LD 1168 – “An Act to Amend Law Regarding the Current Use Valuation of Certain Working Waterfront Land with Respect to Commercial Boat Yards.”***

This bill seeks to amend the tax laws relating to the current use valuation of certain working waterfront land to ensure that commercial boat yards are explicitly included as part of the working waterfront land classification. This bill also defines a "commercial boat yard" as a facility primarily used by individuals or entities engaged in commercial fishing activities, and it recognizes the vital role these facilities play in Maine's economy.

Commercial boat yards are essential to Maine's vibrant maritime and fishing industries. By amending this tax classification, we are helping to preserve these crucial working waterfronts and protect them from being priced out of existence due to escalating property taxes.

Maine's working waterfronts are central to the state's coastal economy. Maine's commercial fishing industry generates hundreds of millions in revenue annually and supports thousands of jobs in seafood harvesting, processing, and distribution. Commercial boat yards play a pivotal role in our industry by providing essential infrastructure like docks, moorings, and storage for fishing vessels.

Without these facilities in the future, commercial fishermen would have fewer opportunities to dock, store, and maintain their boats, potentially leading to economic hardship for Maine's working waterfront communities. Including commercial boat yards in the current use valuation system is crucial to preserving the viability of these industries.

The current use taxation program allows landowners to pay property taxes based on the land's use rather than its market value. For working waterfront properties, this system provides significant tax relief, which helps prevent property taxes from outpacing the income that these properties generate.

Commercial boat yards have been excluded from this classification, even though they are essential to the economic and cultural fabric of coastal Maine. This bill will ensure that boat yards, which provide critical infrastructure to the commercial fishing industry, are treated equitably under the law, making it more affordable for business owners to continue operations and sustain their livelihoods.

Maine's commercial boat yards serve as economic hubs that support not only the fishing industry but also associated businesses like seafood processing, maintenance, and repair services, all of which contribute to our coastal economy. By ensuring that commercial boat yards are included under the current use program, we are making a long-term investment in the preservation of this unique aspect of Maine's culture. This legislation helps ensure that future generations will be able to access the infrastructure needed to maintain Maine's maritime traditions.

I urge you to support this bill to help preserve Maine's working waterfronts and ensure that commercial boat yards remain viable for future generations. Thank you for your time and consideration. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Billy Bob Faulkingham". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the word "Respectfully,".

Rep. Billy Bob Faulkingham
House Republican Leader