



**Trustee Bill Eisenhardt**

**Testimony in Support of LD 681, "An Act Regarding Public Higher Education Funding in the State"**

***Maine Maritime Academy***

Good afternoon, Senator Rafferty, Representative Murphy, and Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs.

Trustee Gardner brings deep expertise in Maine's Higher Education structure. My own experience has been in the maritime institutions in the US and abroad. Two Different Perspectives that, I believe, complement each other.

I've worked in several higher education institutions in Maine, including 18 years at MMA. In addition, I served as president of Cal Maritime for 12 years and was a founding member of IAMU, representing 75 maritime institutions in over 30 countries.

I'd like to personally think I was appointed president of Cal Maritime for my good looks and stunning personality but in truth, it was clear that my experience at Maine Maritime Academy was a key factor. In the late 90's and early 2000's Maine Maritime Academy was the leading maritime education institute in the US, Bar none. Programs in Ocean Studies, Power Engineering, Logistics, Vessel Operations and International trade and transportation systems.... All were cutting edge at the time.

After 7 years at Cal Maritime, the institution's enrollment, operating budget and program offerings were comparable to MMA's. As the institutions were not real competitors being so far apart and as I has known the then president of MMA for over 20 years we sat down and compared out budget lines. While there were some minor differences (snow removal for ex) there was only one significant difference. State appropriations. MMA was \$8.6 million, and Cal Maritime was \$23 million with the same enrollment. But it was not the

difference that struck me about those numbers as California was the 5<sup>th</sup> largest economy in the world then, it was that \$8.6 million MMA appropriation had not increased one dollar from what it was over the years I had been at MMA.

Not-One-Dollar despite being in a relatively good economic time.

The bill before you attempts to begin to address those years of neglect (No blame anywhere). It does not attempt to address it all at once (\$23 million) but in a gradual manner.

I've also been following Maine's growing focus on the "Blue Economy" of Marine Biotechnology, Marine renewable power, Maritime shipping modernization and ocean data. There are several institutions in Maine that can help further that initiative, and MMA is uniquely one of them. The academy sits on a prime waterfront location, is currently refurbishing a modern pier system with federal support, maintains a fleet of vessels tied directly to the blue economy initiatives, houses adjacent laboratories and will soon receive a new 500-foot ocean going training ship-an ideal platform for research, training, and innovation.

Accordingly, I urge your thoughtful support.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I would be happy to answer any questions.

Sincerely,  
Bill Eisenhardt  
Trustee  
Maine Maritime Academy

**MAINE MARITIME ACADEMY**

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