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THE MAINE SENATE  
132nd Legislature

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**Joint Standing Committee on Transportation on  
LD 115, An Act to Assess Impact Fees on Megayachts  
April 4, 2025**

Senator Nangle, Representative Crafts, and esteemed members of the Joint Standing Committee on Transportation: I am Senator Rick Bennett of Oxford; and I have the honor of serving 14 communities in Western Maine in the State Senate. I am here to present LD 115, "An Act to Assess Impact Fees on Megayachts."

This proposal likely sounds familiar to you if you sat on this committee last year. Despite gaining the support of both chambers last session, Representative Lookner's proposal was pocket-vetoed by the Chief Executive. However this is still a sound policy that should be enacted in our state.

Apart from the increase in revenue gathered, and how that revenue is spent, your average Mainer will not be impacted in any way by these new fees. Super yachts and megayachts are only owned by the super wealthy. These ships often cost hundreds of millions of dollars to purchase and require tens of millions of dollars to operate each year. For example, the annual costs associated with owning a \$400 million yacht would be enough to run a small hospital in the U.S. or to administer 10 million malaria vaccines in Africa.

On top of that, owning a megayacht is the single most polluting activity in which a person can engage. Most of these emissions occur whether the yacht goes anywhere or not. Energy is consumed for air conditioning, swimming pools, desalination, refrigeration, etc. Critics have equated owning a megayacht to "ecocide" and "climate vandalism."

While fees on megayachts are not yet widespread in the United States, they are not uncommon in Europe. Naples, Italy has banned yachts larger than 75 meters from its harbors. Even if the fees imposed are not targeted only at megayachts, the fee structures are based on size and amenities so megayachts must pay heavy fees. For example:

- Marina di Portofino can run nearly \$2,500 a day;
- Marina Grande in Capri is around \$3,000;
- Porto Cervo in Sardinia is more than \$3,175 each day;
- Marina Port Ibiza runs more than \$4,000; and
- Puerto Banus in Marbella costs nearly \$4,300 daily for a 180 foot yacht.

Arguments that this would harm tourism or serve as a deterrent for wealthy individuals to come to our state are not credible. People who can pay tens of millions of dollars a year on maintenance will not be put off by paying an extra \$500 or so per day. And if they can spend thousands of dollars to moor in European destinations, they can certainly pay to dock at our

ports.

And while no other states have fees on megayachts, several states have environmental compliance fees that must be paid during vessel registration. For example, below is a Florida vessel fee registration chart, including a small fee for the Aquatic Plate Fund and Manatee Trust Fund.

<b>Vessel Classification</b>	<b>Length</b>	<b>Vessel Registration Fee</b>	<b>Reduced Fee</b>	<b>Optional County Fee*</b>
Class A-1	Less than 12 Feet	\$5.50	\$2.95	\$1.75
Class A-2	12 to less than 16 Feet	\$16.25	\$11.00	\$7.13
Class 1	16 to less than 26 Feet	\$28.75	\$20.40	\$13.38
Class 2	26 to less than 40 Feet	\$78.25	\$57.50	\$38.13
Class 3	40 to less than 65 Feet	\$127.75	\$94.95	\$62.88
Class 4	65 to less than 110 Feet	\$152.75	\$113.40	\$75.38
Class 5	110 or more in length	\$189.75	\$141.15	\$93.88
<b>Dealer Registration</b>		\$25.50		\$11.75

Maine's harbors have needs. Those needs will only increase as sea levels rise and threaten our coasts. The money raised from this bill will go directly to support our coastal communities and working waterfronts. Municipalities will be allowed to keep 10% of the impact fees and the rest will go to a new Megayacht Fund. Half of the funds in the Megayacht Fund will go to support harbor infrastructure and activities, and sea level rise mitigation infrastructure. The other half will go to support public transit infrastructure, including ferries, which have seen dramatic ticket price increases over the last several years.

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