

# Memo



**To:** State of Maine Legislature Transportation Committee

**From:** Molly Eddy- Rockland Harbormaster

**Date:** 4/7/25

**RE:** LD115

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Recommendation: Do not approve LD115 and seek alternative solutions

Background – LD115 proposes a \$10/foot fee on “mega yachts” of 150’ or greater only at municipal slips and allows the municipality to keep 10% of that fee to establish a state fund to support both climate resiliency and public infrastructure.

It won’t be able to do either of these things effectively at the state level because the premise of the bill is fundamentally flawed and misunderstands the yachting industry.

Mega Yachts, or privately owned personal vessels over 150’ are generally crewed by professional mariners and rarely, if ever come into docks let alone municipal ones. These vessels draw too much attention from the general public which creates additional logistical hurdles, for these reasons; they send their passengers to shore in small launches which drop passengers and crew off and go back to the mother vessel. In my three years as Rockland’s Harbormaster, I have yet to see such a vessel come in to a municipally owned facility and in my decades of working on the water in Mid-Coast Maine and abroad, I’m not sure I’ve ever seen a privately owned yacht of 150’ or more come to any pier or float except the most exclusive marinas, and even that is becoming a more rare occurrence.

While not everything state government does needs to be completely self-funded to be valid, the wording of this bill speaks to the intention of the writers’ that the bill will have enough income to create two funds that will have enough income to support harbor resiliency infrastructure and public transportation projects. I do not believe that there will be enough income to support the staffing required to collect and administer such funds, let alone the funds themselves.

There are other possible ways to raise funds through the maritime industry. A suggestion I have made to Rep. Lookner, though have not run by any attorney, is that the state could impose a small fee on each cruise vessel passenger (Low Berth Count is industry standard) for each Maine port they call on. A \$2/pax/port fee on a 3000 passenger vessel calling on 3 Maine ports,

could bring in \$18000.00 and could be billed by an existing state office. Cruise funds must be used to improve the cruise passenger experience, and I believe making sure there are safe, clean harbors and sidewalks that do not flood at high tide would fall under that umbrella, it could also include a fund to help cover the cost of derelict vessels in said harbors, which is a near continuous point of strife and friction all through Maine's coastal waters.