



# HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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## Tiffany Strout

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April 24, 2025

Testimony  
In Support of

### **LD 1708 –An Act to Create the Commercial Fishing Safety Fund to Further Develop Training and Provide Equipment to Recover Ships and Other Watercraft and Persons in Distress or Lost at Sea**

Good afternoon, Senator Tepler, Representative Hepler and distinguished members of the Marine Resource Committee. I am Representative Tiffany Strout from Harrington, representing the towns of Milbridge, Harrington, Columbia, Columbia Falls, Centerville, Addison, Jonesport, Beals, Jonesboro, Roque Bluffs, Whitneyville and Machias in beautiful Washington County. I am here today to present my bill LD 1708 – **An Act to Create the Commercial Fishing Safety Fund to Further Develop Training and Provide Equipment to Recover Ships and Other Watercraft and Persons in Distress or Lost at Sea.**

Mainers have great love and respect for our fishing heritage and the communities involved with the industry. Many are aware that regardless of how much experience you have, the weather can change quickly, and the ocean can be very unforgiving. We lost three fishermen from the DownEast area within the last 2 years. Tylar Michaud from Steuben was 18 years old when he went overboard from his fishing vessel *Top Gun* and on January 18<sup>th</sup> the sinking of *Sudden Impact* took the lives of Chet and Aaron Barrett from South Addison.

In both events, Marine Patrol along with fishermen and US Coast Guard responded and put into action their protocols for search and rescue efforts. The search plans for Tylar and Chet and Aaron were different and required different types of resources and equipment. Marine Patrol did a great job working in both situations and putting best efforts into each search. Unfortunately, the outcome for both rescues was not the outcome anyone wanted.

In speaking with the fishing families about the safety and resources available, I tried to think of ways to help but not to create more regulations or mandates. We all know everything comes down to funding availability and priorities. The intent of this bill is to establish The Commercial Safety Fishing Fund designated to allow the Commissioner of the Department of Marine Resources, working with the Commercial Fishing Safety Council, to review and provide continue training for such things as diving or the purchase of technology like a remotely operated vehicle (ROV) that could do under water investigations prior to divers being deployed or in lieu of divers in unsafe locations.

Being prepared for the unthinkable may not always be an option but having a fund is a tangible way to make sure the best options are available for future incidents.

Thank you for your time today and I would be glad to answer any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Tiffany Strout".

Tiffany Strout  
State Representative

District 11 Addison, Beals, Columbia, Columbia Falls, Harrington, Jonesboro, Jonesport, Machias, Milbridge, Roque Bluffs, Whitneyville, Centerville Township, and North Washington (Part)