

**TESTIMONY OF
Deirdre Gilbert
Department of Marine Resources**

**The Department of Marine Resources (DMR) is testifying
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
Before the Committee on Marine Resources
Sponsored by Representative Strout
Date of Hearing: April 24, 2025**

Senator Tepler, Representative Hepler, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Marine Resources, my name is Deirdre Gilbert, Director of State Marine Policy for DMR and I am testifying on behalf of the Department in support of LD 1708.

We understand that the recent, tragic loss of F/V Sudden Impact and crew members Chester and Aaron Barrett is the impetus for Representative Strout advancing this legislation. The Department is supportive of efforts to improve safety in the commercial fishing industry and currently relies upon the Commercial Fishing Vessel Safety Council for information and advice on fishing safety issues. LD 1708 would create a new dedicated fund that could receive donations from any source and would be used to support activities related to improving safety in the commercial fishing industry and improving the department's ability to conduct search and rescue and recovery operations, including the acquisition of necessary equipment. The Commercial Fishing Vessel Safety Council would advise on any expenditures from the Fund.

In the aftermath of a loss such as the Barrett family has experienced, it is important to find ways that positive change can be possible. For this reason, the Department supports LD 1708.

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