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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, CONSERVATION & FORESTRY
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JANET T. MILLS
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TESTIMONY BEFORE THE JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON MARINE
RESOURCES,
IN OPPOSITION TO LD 1625

An Act Regarding the Preservation of Working Waterfronts

April 24, 2025

Senator Tepler, Representative Hepler, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Marine Resources, my name is Laura Graham. I am the Director of the Land for Maine's Future (LMF) in the Bureau of Information and Land Use Planning. I am speaking on behalf of the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry in opposition to LD 1625, *"An Act Regarding the Preservation of Working Waterfronts."*

While we appreciate the intent of LD 1625, we must raise several important considerations with regard to the LMF Program and the Working Waterfront Access Protection Program (WWAPP) created by Title 12 §6042 and Title 5 §6203-B to address the loss of working waterfront access for our commercial fisheries. The WWAPP permanently protects working waterfront access by extinguishing development rights that are inconsistent with commercial fishing. LMF and the Department of Marine Resources (DMR) are partners in the implementation of the WWAPP. Each relies on the other's expertise in making the program work.

We understand and support the goals of this proposed legislation: the continued loss of working waterfront access for our commercial fisheries is a true emergency. However, the proposed §6043 in Title 12 would not help to reverse this trend as it does not add new powers or capacities beyond being duplicative of what is already available under §6042, the WWAPP. Furthermore, the language of §6203-G is inconsistent with the requirements of §6043, most notably by charging the LMF Board with deciding working waterfront priorities. Such a determination constitutes the most important contribution LMF receives from DMR with their superior expertise in our commercial fisheries and conflicts with the tasks assigned to a review panel under proposed §6043.

For all the reasons stated, we must oppose this particular bill.

I'm happy to answer any questions you may have, now or at the work session.

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