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*Testimony of Representative Kristi Mathieson presenting
LD 1625, An Act Regarding the Preservation of Working
Waterfronts*

Before the Joint Standing Committee on Marine Resources

Good afternoon, Senator Tepler, Representative Hepler and esteemed colleagues on the Marine Resources Committee. I am Kristi Mathieson representing House District 151, which is Kittery. Thank you for your time today. I am pleased to be here to present **LD 1625, An Act Regarding the Preservation of Working Waterfronts**.

Maine's working waterfront is a critical part of our state's blue economy and has come under intense pressure in recent years due to rapid development, climate change, and global economic forces. These pressures, in combination with sky-rocketing real estate values, lead many working waterfront business owners to sell their waterfront properties and exit the sector. This loss of operational working waterfronts will be devastating to Maine's blue economy and ancillary businesses. Further loss of access points to the ocean will translate into loss of livelihoods in Maine's heritage fishing industry and damage the character and sense of place so valued by residents and visitors alike.

LD 1625 is a result of my community's unsuccessful bid to access 'rapid acquisition funding' to acquire a parcel of working waterfront that is literally the gateway to Maine. Kittery has tried to work over the last four years to access funding for this property through the Governor's Office of Policy Innovation and the Future (GOPIF), Maine Department of Marine Resources (DMR), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Gulf of Maine Research Institute (GMRI), Land for Maine's Future (LMF), The Nature Conservancy of Maine (TNC), Maine Coast Heritage Trust, Maine Community Foundation, Coastal Enterprises Inc. (CEI), Island Institute and Maine Coast Fishermen's Association (MCFA) but each entity has said the same thing: there was no mechanism available to acquire the land.

Through several discussions with many stakeholders including but not limited to:

- Kendra Amaral - Town Manager, Kittery

- Rebecca Rundquist - Seameadow
- Cameron Wake - UNE North, Center for North Atlantic Studies
- Nick Battista - Island Institute
- Monique Coombs - Maine Coast Fishermen's Association
- Jonathan Labaree, Nikki Yanok, and David Reidmiller - Gulf of Maine Research Institute
- Ben Martens - Maine Coast Fishermen's Association
- Deirdre Gilbert - Department of Marine Resources
- Emily Horton - Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry
- Laura Graham - Land for Maine's Future Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry

The attached legislation was drafted. I want to thank all involved for their hard work and many discussions! The goal of the legislation is to establish a mechanism for working waterfront rapid acquisition by creating a new subsection within LMF that is solely for the purpose of addressing “loss” of working waterfronts and proposing a new section to Title 12 to provide funds over a short time frame to support the purchase of existing or potential future working waterfront. This is a critical need, as it is rather difficult, if not impossible, for municipalities to raise the money necessary over these short periods of time (days to weeks, sometimes months).

I would argue that a rapid response funding is critical for Maine right now as we expect more waterfront property will be for sale as we suffer through more coastal storms with higher sea levels and more damage. My Town Manager, Kendra Amaral, is here to answer any technical questions as she has done the yeoman's work on this bill. I appreciate all the hard work you continue to do in your committee and look forward to working with you on this important legislation.