



**LD1231: An Act Requiring Ferries to Dock Overnight on Certain Islands for Emergency
Purposes
Testimony Neither for Nor Against
April 29, 2025**

Senator Nangle, Representative Crafts, and distinguished members of the Transportation Committee:

My name is Thomas Judge, and I reside in Port Clyde, Maine. I am here today representing LifeFlight of Maine.

Assuring the viability of EMS including evacuation from our island communities is an imperative. Emergency evacuation from the islands is complex with sea conditions, wind, fog, temperature, all interfacing with logistics. Currently island evacuation is managed by multiple agencies depending on the locale of the island. Agencies include the Maine State Ferry Service, LifeFlight, Penobscot Island Air, the US Coast Guard, private fishing boats, municipal fire boats, and commercial ferries. It is a complex system that has grown organically to meet need. Having helped cover EMS and evacuations from Monhegan for over forty years with St. George Ambulance I am well versed in the challenges.

Currently, we are at an inflection point with huge cost and staffing challenges to the emergency care system on our island communities with parallel challenges to the Maine State Ferry Service which has long provided off island transport including basing and staffing ferries on the islands at night. Our understanding is that while there is discussion regarding potential changes to island basing at night, and the genesis of this legislation, the MFS has stated there are no changes to night basing currently contemplated.

Essential to all of these discussions is LD841, **Resolve, to Study the Delivery of Emergency Medical Services to and Ferry Service Effects on Island Communities in the State** which has received an ought to pass as amended vote in the Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee. We believe a thorough study incorporating all of the stakeholders is the necessary first step to establishing a more sustainable and reliable system for island emergency medical evacuation and essential public safety services.

In the interim we recommend adhering to the principle that we must have reliable and predictable plans and services to support our island communities in managing a medical emergency; while simultaneously not building the system into an unsustainable configuration. We need a data driven system design to meet the needs of today and the future in assuring our island communities have a reliable evacuation system for medical emergencies.

Thank you for your consideration.
Thomas Judge, Director Special Projects

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