

Testimony of Genevieve McDonald
Joint Standing Committee on Transportation
In FAVOR of
LD 947, An Act To Clarify Overnight Docking At Mainland Ports For Certain Island Ferry Vessels
LD 1231, An Act Requiring Ferries To Dock Overnight On Certain Islands For Emergency
Purposes

April 29, 2025

Senator Nangle, Representative Crafts, and Honorable Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Transportation, I am Genevieve McDonald of Stonington and I am a Senior Policy Advisor with Preti Strategies. I am also the former State Representative for the communities of Swan's Island, Frenchboro, North Haven, and Vinalhaven. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today on behalf of the Town of Islesboro, in support of **LD's 947 and LD 1231**, two bills that are essential for the continued sustainability of Maine's unbridged island communities.

LD 1231, An Act Requiring Ferries to Dock Overnight on Certain Islands for Emergency Purposes, addresses a critical issue. In the event of a medical emergency, fire that requires mutual aid, or mass evacuation event, if a ferry is not stationed overnight on the islands, valuable time is lost potentially endangering lives. By requiring a vehicle-carrying ferry to remain overnight on the islands, LD 1231 ensures that safe and efficient emergency transportation is available when islanders need it most.

Equally important, **LD 947, An Act to Clarify Overnight Docking at Mainland Ports for Certain Island Ferry Vessels**, strengthens the operational flexibility of the Maine State Ferry Service by clarifying policies around overnight docking at mainland ports. There are operational circumstances when docking on the mainland is necessary. LD 947 ensures that these practical needs are recognized and supported.

We respectfully request the committee consider amending the bill to clarify that the Department of Transportation prioritize docking vessels at their island port in management decisions, and that rules that have a major substantive impact on the lives of islanders, also be major substantive in regulation.

Together, LD 1231 and LD 947 create a balanced approach: prioritizing overnight ferry availability for emergency response on the islands, while allowing for necessary operational flexibility on the

mainland when appropriate. These bills work in tandem to reinforce the Ferry Service's role as a vital link in our statewide emergency and transportation infrastructure. A dependable ferry, properly stationed, is not a luxury—it is essential public safety infrastructure.

I respectfully urge the Committee to support both LD 1231 and LD 947. Thank you for your time and for your continued support of Maine's island communities. I would be happy to answer any questions.

LD 947, An Act to Clarify Overnight Docking at Mainland Ports for Certain Island Ferry Vessels

Be it enacted by the People of the State of Maine as follows:

Sec. 1. 23 MRSA §4401, sub-§1 is enacted to read:

1. Overnight docking on islands of ferry vessels. The Department of Transportation shall prioritize docking a ferry vessel operating under this section overnight at its island port when that docking is common practice.

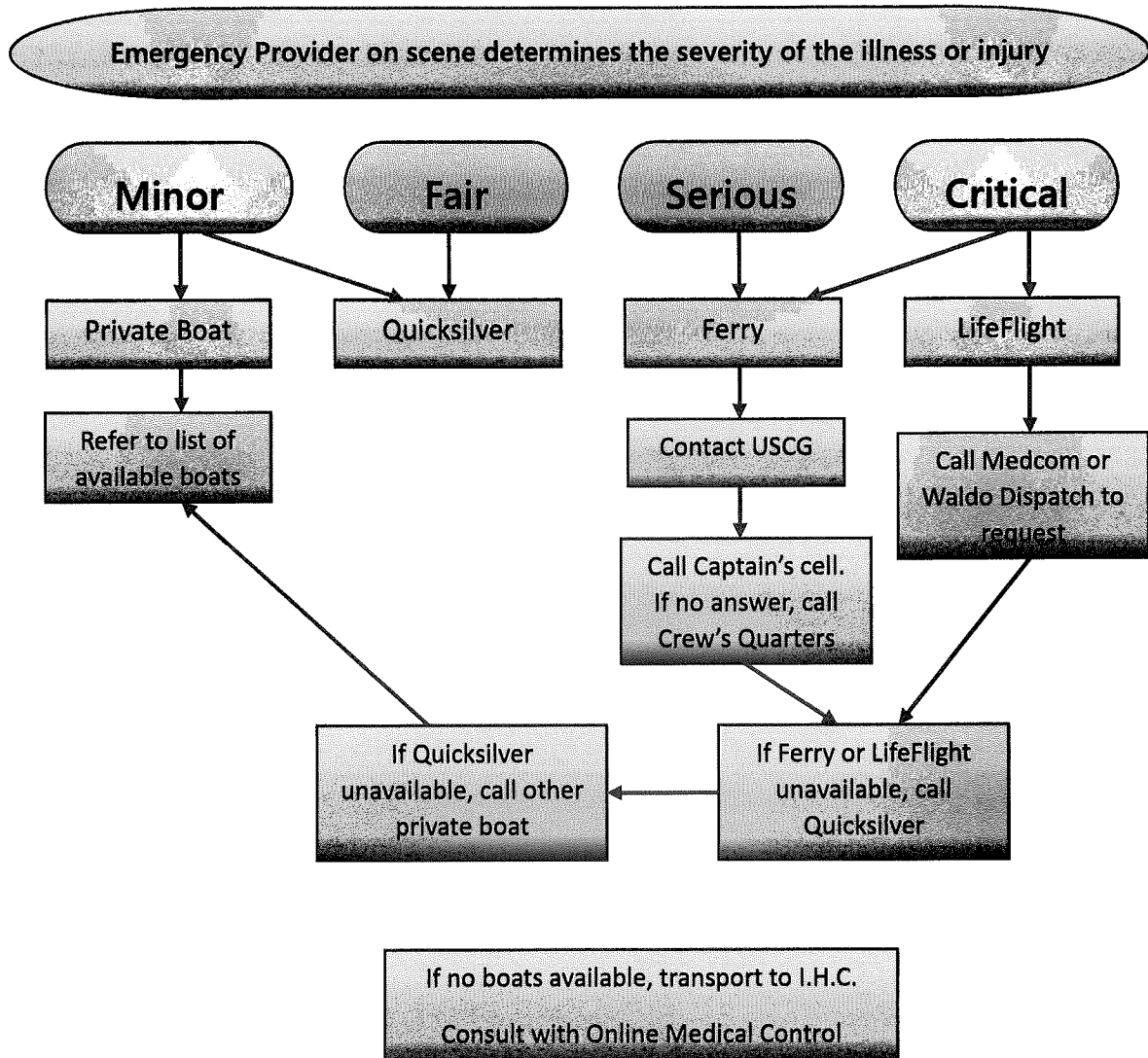
Sec. 2. 23 MRSA §4401, sub-§2 is enacted to read:

2. Exception. Notwithstanding subsection 1, the Department of Transportation may require a ferry vessel to dock at a mainland port or at an alternative island port for an emergency situation, including, but not limited to, an extreme weather event.

Sec. 3. 23 MRSA §4401, as amended by PL 1999, c. 20, §1, is further amended by enacting at the end a new paragraph to read:

The department may adopt rules necessary to implement this section. Rules adopted pursuant to this section are major substantive rules as defined in Title 5, chapter 375, subchapter 2-A.

Islesboro Ambulance Service Emergency Patient Care Flowchart



Transport for all conditions contingent upon assessment vs. Maine EMS Protocols.
All transport decisions can be discussed with online Medical Control of hospital.

Fair: Injuries or illness with no apparent life threats. Requires medical attention.

Serious: Patient possibly acutely ill, or possible serious injury. Requires immediate transport.

Critical: Patient may be unconscious; potential life-threatening injury or illness, e.g., compromised airway, stroke, etc.