

Mail body: Fwd: Testimony

LD 1231

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**From:** Penny York <penelopeyork@icloud.com>  
**Date:** April 28, 2025 at 8:30:51 PM EDT  
**To:** Penny York <happilyeverafta@yahoo.com>  
**Subject:** Testimony

Good Afternoon Chair, and Members of the Transportation Committee.

My name is Penny York, and I am here to speak in strong opposition to the Maine Department of Transportation's proposal to relocate all ferry docking to the mainland, away from the islands that they are meant to serve.

At its core, this plan abandons the very communities that the ferry system was created to support. The ferries are a lifeline, not luxuries. Removing them from the islands would endanger lives, particularly during nighttime medical emergencies. When Lifeflight helicopters are grounded due to fog, snow or high winds, which happens often enough, and when lobster boats are too dangerous to use in rough seas, the ferries are the only safe, reliable way to reach critical care. Imagine a patient in pre-term labor, a burn victim requiring urgent specialized (and sterile) treatment, or someone showing the early signs of a stroke - these are not cases where bouncing across white capped waves 12 miles out at sea in a 30 foot Lobster boat is remotely safe. Delaying or endangering transport in these situations could be the difference between life and death.

But the dangers to the island communities extend beyond medical emergencies. The proposed change to the docking would also require a flip to the time schedule of the ferry, meaning that the first ferry to leave North Haven would not arrive in Rockland until 10:45 am, making it impossible for residents who commute to the mainland to maintain a normal work day, or for students to attend a full day of school. High School students attending programs like the MidCoast school of technology, essential for building skilled careers that our community so desperately needs, would be cut off from these opportunities. In addition, the last ferry would then leave Rockland at 3:45 pm, which takes choice away from those who may need to attend out-of-town specialty medical appointment or even to accomplish more than one task, like going to the Dr AND then to the pharmacy.

A ferry schedule change and docking change of this nature means that every time the kids leave the island for sports, it becomes an overnight game...which means that the school and families have to pay for a hotel in order to support the teams. It's an incredibly expensive prospect for a small school. In some cases, these schools are so small, that if one or two kids left, there would not be enough remaining kids to have a team.

Make no mistake: this plan would turn the every day realities of island life into constant struggles. What now allows island communities to be vibrant, sustainable and growing, would become reasons for families to leave - and for future generations to never return. Vibrant island communities would become seasonal, shuttered in the winter, waiting for Summer people to return.

We should be working to strengthen and diversify island communities, not isolating them further. Keeping a ferry docked on the islands is not just a matter of convenience, it is a matter of safety, equity and survival.

The future of Maine's island communities depends on your decision. Please stand with us and reject this short sighted proposal.

Thank you.

Sent from my iPad