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Testimony of Rep. Gary Friedmann Introducing

LD 1477, An Act to Provide an Exemption from Pilotage Requirements for Passenger Ferry Service Between Bar Harbor, Maine and Yarmouth, Nova Scotia

Before the Joint Standing Committee on Transportation

Senator Nangle, Representative Crafts and Members of the Transportation Committee, my name is Gary Friedmann, and I represent House District 14, which includes Bar Harbor, Cranberry Isles, Lamoine and Mount Desert. It is my honor to present to you **LD 1477, An Act to Provide an Exemption from Pilotage Requirements for Passenger Ferry Service Between Bar Harbor, Maine and Yarmouth, Nova Scotia**.

Bay Ferries operates the Cat ferry between Bar Harbor and Yarmouth, Nova Scotia and has done so for over two decades. Additionally, Bay Ferries rents the ferry terminal from the Town of Bar Harbor, restored the facility, invested tens of millions of dollars in the terminal and maintains these facilities.

Before I was elected to the Legislature, I served on the Bar Harbor Town Council for over a decade, during the period where the town voted to purchase the ferry terminal property to preserve the opportunity for future ferry service. I have ridden the ferry many times and can testify to its importance to both the towns of Bar Harbor and Yarmouth, Nova Scotia.

Current Maine law requires every large foreign vessel or vessel under American register, including ferries, entering or departing from any Maine port or harbor to take a licensed pilot. However, for most of Maine's history this was not the case. Prior to 2012, the ferry service between Maine and Nova Scotia did not require pilots, which makes sense as these ferries sailed between Maine and Nova Scotia nearly every day, and the ferry captains became very familiar with the routes in and out of our harbors and bays.

However, in 2012, during the period when the Maine to Yarmouth ferry service was suspended, the pilots lobbied the Legislature to repeal longstanding Maine law and require a pilot every time an international ferry sailed in and out of Maine's harbors and bays.

LD 1477 provides an exemption from pilotage requirements for certain vessels providing regularly scheduled ferry operations between Bar Harbor, Maine and Yarmouth, Nova Scotia.

This simply brings Maine back in line with how we operated previously. During those years, operating without licensed pilots, there were no accidents. An international ferry exemption will not be unique to Maine, as there are no other international ferry operations in the United States that require the taking of a pilot on every trip.

The Cat is an American-flagged vessel with an American crew, many of whom are graduates of the Maine Maritime Academy. In fact, Bay Ferries leases the Cat from the United States Navy, where it is used as a high-speed transport vessel (HST 2), and the Navy requires it to remain U.S. flagged, to be crewed by U.S. citizens, and that all work be conducted in U.S. shipyards. The Cat's crew is provided by Seaward Services, the same company that supplies crews for other military sea transportation service ships.

In summary, my years of service on the Bar Harbor Town Council and experience with Bay Ferries has shown me that pilots are overused in Frenchman's Bay. Bay Ferries has stepped up and invested in both Bar Harbor and Yarmouth, Nova Scotia and is a key cog in the economic development of these tourist towns. Based on my experience, I can tell you that the town is very interested in maintaining the economic viability of this important international ferry service.

Please support LD 1477, which will help keep Bay Ferries in Bar Harbor and maintain our successful ferry service with Nova Scotia.