

**Testimony of Shey Conover**  
**Joint Standing Committee on Transportation**  
**In FAVOR of LD 1731**  
**An Act to Increase the Influence of the Maine State Ferry Advisory Board on the**  
**Funding and Operations of the Maine State Ferry Service**

April 29, 2025

Senator Nangle, Representative Crafts, and Honorable Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Transportation, I am Shey Conover, a resident of Islesboro for the past twenty-two years, and the current chair of the Islesboro Selectboard. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today on, in support of **LD 1731, An Act to Increase the Influence of the Maine State Ferry Advisory Board on the Funding and Operations of the Maine State Ferry Service.**

The ferry is our lifeline to the mainland, and safe, reliable and affordable ferry transport to the mainland is critical to the survivability of our community. We have been very fortunate, as a Town to have several active community members serve on the Maine State Ferry Advisory Board and finance subcommittee. These advisory board members are proactive in their communication with the town, attending selectboard meetings to participate in what has become a standing agenda item to discuss updates from the Maine State Ferry Service and provide feedback to take back from the town.

Unfortunately, without additional influence from the Maine State Ferry Service Advisory Board structure on the Funding and Operations of the service, what we have is series of meetings that do communicate updates and often mandates from the DOT, but no mechanism to provide substantive influence on the concerns about the operations of the ferry service.

Island communities and the Maine Department of Transportation share a common goal of operating a safe, reliable and affordable ferry service. Empowering the communities that use and rely on the system daily for emergency transportation, transportation for our students, critical goods and services will provide for more practical, responsive and sustainable policies for operating the Maine State Ferry Service.

LD 1731 helps our communities collaborate more substantively with the Maine State Ferry Service to achieve that shared goal and to ensure a strong, reliable ferry service for our island communities now and in the future. I respectfully ask the committee to vote Ought to Pass. Thank you for your time.