

Sponsor's Amendment to Concept Draft, LD 304 (Rep. Crafts)

Preamble. Whereas, increased Maine State Ferry Services operational and capital costs put pressure on the highway fund and resulting passenger/vehicle fares; and

Whereas, the national mariner shortage has made adequate staffing difficult; and

Whereas, proposed overnight docking procedures resulted in safety concerns for island residents; and

Whereas, island residents rely on dependable ferry service to conduct their employment, medical, and social tasks; and

Whereas, island residents are requesting increased transparency and stakeholder input in operational and funding decisions; now, therefore, be it

Sec. 1. Establishment of stakeholder group. Resolved: That the Department of Transportation shall convene a stakeholder group, referred to in this resolve as “the stakeholder group,” to study the existing operations of the Maine State Ferry Service and consider any improvements to the service delivery of the Maine State Ferry Service. The stakeholder group consists of 14 members as follows:

1. The chair of the Maine State Ferry Advisory Board, selected pursuant to Title 23, section 4303, subsection 1;

2. One representative, such as a town manager, from each of the islands serviced by the Maine State Ferry Service pursuant to Title 23, Section 4401 which includes the towns of:

A. North Haven;

B. Vinalhaven;

C. Islesboro;

D. Matinicus Isle;

E. Swan's Island; and

F. Frenchboro

Members from each of the islands shall be appointed by the Commissioner of Transportation.

3. A representative from a municipality in which a mainland terminal exists, appointed by the Commissioner of Transportation;

4. A representative from an unserved unbridged island, appointed by the Commissioner of Transportation;

5. A representative from a private transit provider who provides air- or waterborne transportation, appointed by the Commissioner of Transportation;

6. A representative from an island school unit, appointed by the Commissioner of Transportation; and

7. A representative from the Maine State Employees Association, appointed by the Commissioner of Transportation; and

8. Two representatives from the Department of Transportation or the Maine State Ferry Service, appointed by the Commissioner of Transportation.

Sec. 2. Chair. Resolved: That the chair of the Maine State Ferry Advisory Board serves as chair of the stakeholder group.

Sec. 3. Duties. Resolved: That the stakeholder group shall:

1. Review the conditions of ferry service provision, including but not limited to, recruitment of staff and staffing needs, increased labor and operational costs and current and future transit due to population changes on islands serviced by the Maine State Ferry Service under Title 23, Section 4401 and unserved islands;

2. Assess and recommend improvements to the governance of the Maine State Ferry Service, including a consideration of:

A. The costs and benefits of maintaining the current governance structure of the Maine State Ferry Service;

B. The costs and benefits of transitioning to a transit authority for ferry service in the State;

C. Any additional structural changes necessary to maintain fiscal responsibility with comprehensive service by determining methods to strengthen the Maine State Ferry Advisory Board established by Title 5, section 12004-I, subsection 82 and pursuant to Title 23, Chapter 411, referred to in this resolve as “the board,” including but not limited to:

(1) Reviewing municipal representation on the board;

(2) Requiring the board to post public meeting notice through an interested parties list; and

(3) Assessing the role of the board in the decision-making procedures of the Maine State Ferry Service.

Sec. 4. Compensation. Resolved: That members of the stakeholder group may not be compensated for their work on the stakeholder group.

Sec. 5. Staff assistance. Resolved: That the Department Transportation shall provide necessary staffing services to the stakeholder group within existing resources.

Sec. 6. Report. Resolved: That the Department of Transportation shall provide a report by December 19, 2025 containing findings and recommendations of the stakeholder group,

including views of the group and any suggested legislation, to the Joint Standing Committee on Transportation. The joint standing committee may introduce legislation for presentation to the Second Regular Session of the 132nd Legislature based on the recommendations in the report.

SUMMARY

This resolve creates a stakeholder group to study the existing operations of the Maine State Ferry Service and consider any improvements to the service delivery of the Maine State Ferry Service.