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## Rep. Scott Cuddy's Testimony in Favor of LD 1389 An Act To Improve Maritime Education in Maine

Senator Rafferty, Representative Brennan and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs my name is Scott Cuddy and I live in Winterport. I represent House District 98 which is comprised of Frankfort, Searsport, Swanville, and Winterport. I'm here before you today to speak in favor of LD 1389, An Act To Improve Maritime Education in Maine.

I recently sent out a sponsor's amendment that removed section 2 from the bill. Section 2 dealt with a funding issue that I was able to work out with the Department of Education prior to this hearing. The section of the bill that remains removes the sunset provision of the statute that created the school. In the 129<sup>th</sup> legislature, Senator Erin Herbig and I worked to move the sunset provision back twice and were successful in getting it to the end of the second regular session of this 130<sup>th</sup> legislature. It's important to note that the bill, LD 2020, was in the last cohort of bills that passed before we adjourned sine die, never to return. Had that bill not made it into the bills we passed on the last day of session, the school would have ceased to exist last year.

I want to stay on that thought for a moment. Because of a completely unforeseen and unforeseeable pandemic, this school could be out of existence. If the bill had been scheduled one week later there would be no Maine Ocean School. This school is graduating students. It's preparing high school kids for a world that *needs* them. There are countless opportunities in the maritime professions right now, with even more upcoming. We, as a legislature, need to ensure that Maine kids are there and ready to meet those opportunities now and forever.

The Maine Ocean School has been building each year. Now that the school is being funded the way a new, growing school should be it's on a financial footing like never before. The school and all of it's students are set up for success. We just need to remove the final obstacle. We need to do away with the sunset provision.

I hope that you will vote Ought To Pass on LD 1389 and let the school and these students show you what they can do.

District 98: Frankfort, Searsport, Swanville, and Winterport