

April 20, 2021
Joint Legislative Committee on
Education and Cultural Affairs
Cross Building, Room 208
Augusta, Maine

Written Testimony
LD1389: An Act To Improve Maritime Education in Maine

I want to thank the members of the Joint Legislative Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs and committee chair Senator Joseph Rafferty and co-chair Representative Michael Brennan for the opportunity to provide testimony in favor of passage of LD 1389 An Act to Improve Maritime Education in Maine. I am James S. Gillway a former State Representative and current Town Manager for Searsport. I also serve on the Maine Port Authority and the Maine Bureau of Ocean Energy Task Force.

I am thankful to Representative Scott Cuddy for bringing this bill forward and for picking up the torch to continue supporting the Maine Ocean School for the people of Waldo County and indeed for the State of Maine.

The school has proven itself as a valuable asset to the region by participating in research on the Penobscot Bay and for participating in cleaning the shoreline after a recent plastic spill at the port. Having students who care about our local environment and the future health of our oceans is fantastic.

I know that the school is also studying offshore wind energy as a part of the curriculum. This is so vitally important to Maine's future. Having a high school preparing kids for this future is extremely important. I believe sparking the passion for this industry in high school is critical for the industries success.

Maine has a very rich history of sending our young men and women to maritime related jobs. Living in Maine and passively interacting with the ocean is not enough to prepare students for the current and future jobs that the ocean provides. The Maine Ocean School does prepare students for these careers.

When the Maine Ocean School was created in 2015, I had doubts that it would ever open its doors. There were so many obstacles to overcome and it seemed impossible. The volunteers and staff involved with the school have made the difference and built something special. LD1389 will get rid of the sunset clause and allow the School to continue to grow and succeed. I urge the Committee to vote "ought to pass" on this bill.


James S. Gillway
Searsport Town Manager