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April 20, 2021

Via email to: edu@legislature.maine.gov

Joint Legislative Committee on Education
100 State House Station
Room 208
Augusta, ME 04333

RE: LD1389: An Act to Improve Maritime Education in Maine

To: Senator Joseph Rafferty, co-chair
Representative Michael Brennan, co-chair
Members of the Joint Legislative Committee on Education

I am the Chair of the Maine Ocean School Foundation, a 501(c)(3) organization that supports Maine Ocean School. Our mission is to enhance, expand, and enrich students' educational experiences through private donations, gifts, and grants.

The marine-focused educational opportunity that Maine Ocean School provides is very dear to my heart. I have always had a passion for the water: aquaculture, fishing, sailing/racing, and surfing. For more than a decade, I have volunteered extensively for an environmental nonprofit dedicated to the protection and enjoyment of the world's ocean, waves, and beaches. The synergies between the students' curriculum and the protection of our ocean are limitless. Witnessing the students' leadership of a beach cleanup on Sears Island this past December in response to a plastic waste spill was truly inspiring. Educating younger generations about our largest natural resource will have a direct impact on all of our futures.

LD1389 benefits Maine Ocean School by ending the sunset clause, thus allowing the School's continuation and the strengthening of its roots as the pinnacle of maritime-based education for public high school students in Maine. At the Foundation, we have worked extremely hard over the past five years providing funding to Maine Ocean School in support of their operating budget and supplemental ocean-based learning experiences. The Foundation submitted over \$700,000 of grant proposals to foundations and charitable organizations for the academic year of 2020-2021. We are well positioned to continue this philanthropic outreach for grant funding in the 2021-2022 academic year. The Foundation is also in the process of hiring a part-time Development Director to manage and strengthen our fundraising efforts. We have full confidence in the Board of Trustees, school administrators, and teachers in their efforts to maintain the school's status as the premier marine-based education in the State and we are committed to fulfilling the funding needs of the School on our end.

I strongly urge the Committee to vote "ought to pass" on this bill.

Sincerely,



Mark Haley
Chair, Maine Ocean School Foundation