

January 2022

To: The Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs

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

Senator Rafferty, Representative Brennan, and members of the Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs, my name is Scott McCatherin and I am on the board of directors for Maine Marine Trades Association. I am also employed by Yarmouth Boat Yard and I have worked in the marine industry for many years and hold several professional credentials directly associated with my job description.

Having been in the marine industry in Maine since the mid 80's, workforce training is only recently emerging in a 'mainstream' capacity. There have been several long standing marine related schools and programs available, but mostly they have had a fairly specific focus. Most of the workplace training has been 'hands on' and mostly specific to an individual business or organization. A well-rounded, broad and technologically current curriculum is now in place at Maine Ocean School and several other public institutions. There is a great need for this curriculum in this day and age.

The average age of a skilled and well trained individual in the marine trades is continually trending upward. There are many open positions for skilled or apprentice workers throughout the state. Maine's reputation as a producer of finely crafted boats, ships and skilled craftsmen is at risk. As salaries rise and more and more young people are entering trades as an alternative to college, now is the time to increase marine specific education to young people. I feel that the Maine Ocean School is well positioned to provide the needed education for its students to confidently enter the marine trades' workforce. To put this school at risk in these uncertain economic times would be

counter to the state's short and long term plans for economic and workforce development.

I wholeheartedly support LD 1389 and hope the sunset clause can be removed to allow Maine Ocean School the ability to be on an even playing field with other public magnet schools and enable them to have a greater focus on their educational mission to produce well rounded and well qualified candidates to fill positions in Maine's historic and vital marine industry for many years to come.

Respectfully,

Scott A. McCatherin
Board Member, Maine Marine Trades Association
Electronics and Rigging Technician, Yarmouth Boat Yard