



**Testimony of the Maine Office of Community Affairs
Director Samantha Horn
May 2, 2025**

**Before the Joint Standing Committee on Housing and Economic Development
In Support of LD 1245 An Act to Create a Fund to
Spread Awareness of Maine's Working Waterfronts**

Senator Curry, Representative Gere, and Members of the joint standing committee on Housing and Economic Development, my name is Samantha Horn, Director of the Maine Office of Community Affairs. I am submitting written testimony in support of LD 1245, An Act to Create a Fund to Spread Awareness of Maine's Working Waterfronts. My testimony in support of the bill is based on the sponsor's amendment.

The Maine Office of Community Affairs, or MOCA, was created in 2024 to foster communication and partnerships between the State and communities in this State. Our charge is to engage with municipalities, tribal governments and regional councils to provide coordinated and efficient planning, technical assistance and financial support to better plan for challenges, pursue solutions and create stronger, more resilient communities.

Working waterfronts are a precious and limited resource that keeps Maine's economy and culture strong. Maine Won't Wait and the Governor's Infrastructure Rebuilding and Resilience Commission have highlighted the vulnerability of our working waterfronts and challenged us to protect and strengthen them.

The Maine Coastal Program is proposed in the biennial budget to be transferred to MOCA. The Coastal Program has a strong presence in the working waterfront discussion and MOCA as a whole organization will have substantial expertise in community planning and resilience. Especially in these times of federal funding uncertainty, it makes sense to have a non-lapsing fund that can accept grants and donations to provide communications and technical assistance services in support of working waterfronts, and for MOCA to be the place to house such a fund.

Uses of the fund could be as varied as brochures or advertisements highlighting the importance of working waterfronts; contracts with service providers to assist towns to design public forums, plans, ordinances and information campaigns about working waterfronts; or facilitation for groups that are trying to come to regional or local agreement on strategies for protecting working waterfront properties and facilities.

For those reasons, the Administration supports LD 1245 with the proposed amendment. Thank you for your time. I am happy to provide information for the work session.