



## Maine Professional Guides Association

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[www.maine-guides.org](http://www.maine-guides.org)

Neither for nor Against LD 1663

Senator Dill, Representative Landry and distinguished members of the committee on Inland Fisheries and Wildlife. My name is Don Kleiner, I live in Union and am the Executive Director of the Maine Professional Guides Association. The association represents roughly 1000 licensed guides throughout the state. Collectively our members offer almost any sort of guided outdoor experience you can imagine.

The current pandemic has spurred an increase in people getting outside and indications are that will continue for at least the next year. Something that we all see as a positive. Use is up across all outdoor activities and is noticeable in the areas that this committee is responsible for including boating.

We are generally supportive of education for all outdoor activities. We do urge a thorough discussion about how such a large number of folks will be educated. Online courses are certainly important in that discussion but please keep in mind that a significant part of our population has very limited broadband or even no Internet access. That situation will certainly improve over time, but it remains a significant challenge.

This bill if passed would affect all power boaters including those on the coastal waters. I encourage you to engage those on the marine side to be certain that they are included in this conversation. Keep in mind that in many coastal communities running a boat is critical to earning a living and is taught from a very young age.

Please also consider an issue for many of our members, users of rental boats or boats that come as part of a package while staying at a sporting camp. Not insurmountable to be sure, but something to consider. I expect that the model being used for snowmobile and ATV rentals might work here.

We would also point out that the bill will not impact one of the areas of what we see as the greatest need for basic boating safety education, human propelled watercraft. A much heavier lift to be sure but one worth at least considering as you discuss the possibilities.

Given where we are in the current legislative session, I am not sure that you have the time to fully discuss these and other important issues related to this bill. I would encourage the committee to carry this bill over to next winter to allow for a broader conversation including more stakeholders.

Thank you for sparing me a few moments and I hope that this has been helpful for your deliberations. Please do not hesitate to e-mail or call if I can answer any questions.

*An organization of professional guides dedicated to promoting a quality, ethical outdoor experience.*