

Testimony in Support of LD 976 to restore the Swan Island Ferry.

To whom it may concern,

I am writing as the manager of Annabella's Restaurant in Richmond, Maine, in support of the reinstatement of the ferry service from Richmond to Swan Island. As a business person here in Richmond, I have witnessed firsthand the positive impact that ferry access to Swan Island could have, not just for our restaurant, but for the entire community.

During the summer months, Richmond sees a significant increase in visitors, and many of these tourists are drawn by the beauty and unique charm of Swan Island. The ferry service would provide a vital link between the mainland and this incredible natural resource, encouraging more visitors to explore the island while benefiting the local economy. At Annabella's, we have noticed an uptick in foot traffic and, therefore, business during the summer months when Swan Island is easily accessible. Reinstalling the ferry service would undoubtedly continue to drive this growth, making Richmond an even more attractive destination for tourists.

However, the value of this ferry service extends far beyond economic benefits. For our community, Swan Island holds cultural and historical significance, and many residents have long relied on the island for recreational and educational purposes. Whether it's for a day of hiking, fishing, or simply enjoying the outdoors, Swan Island offers an unparalleled experience for locals, and easy access to it would enhance the quality of life for those who call Richmond home.

Additionally, ferry access to Swan Island would help build a stronger sense of place in Richmond. When people can easily visit a nearby natural treasure, it fosters a deeper connection to the land, history, and community. The ferry service would serve as a symbolic bridge, not just between Richmond and Swan Island, but between our town's past, present, and future. It would reinforce our identity as a welcoming and vibrant community where people can come together to enjoy the beauty that surrounds us.

Finally, the tourism draw provided by ferry service to Swan Island is undeniable. Richmond, with its rich history and stunning waterfront, is a town that thrives on tourism. Visitors who come to explore Swan Island often find themselves returning to experience more of what our town has to offer. The ferry service would bring additional foot traffic to local businesses, helping to sustain our economy, create jobs, and support the small businesses that are the lifeblood of our community.

In conclusion, the reinstatement of the ferry service from Richmond to Swan Island is not only a step toward enriching our local economy but also an opportunity to strengthen our community's connection to this beautiful, historically significant island. I strongly urge you to support this initiative, as it would benefit both the residents of Richmond and the many visitors who will come to appreciate our town and Swan Island for years to come.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Stacy LaBombard
Manager, Annabella's Restaurant, Richmond, Maine
Resident of Alna, Maine