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**Alison Sucey, Chief Operating Office & Director of Government Affairs,
On Behalf of the Maine Tourism Association**

In Opposition To

LD 460 An Act to Amend Certain Employment Laws To Help Front-line and Other Workers

March 7, 2022

Senator Daughtry, Representative Sylvester, and Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Labor and Housing:

I am Alison Sucey, the Chief Operating Officer and Director of Government Affairs for the Maine Tourism Association, and I present this testimony in opposition to LD 460. This testimony addresses the sponsor's amendment.

We appreciate the sponsor's intent to assist restaurant workers as nearly everyone in this industry—workers and employers—is struggling through pandemic challenges and workforce shortages. However, it appears to us to be poor public policy to single out one type of business and impose an additional 80 hours of paid sick leave when other businesses wouldn't have to make this accommodation. Further, the earned paid leave (EPL) law enacted last year provides additional benefits for part-time workers. Earned paid leave was subject to lengthy hearings, negotiations, and a rule-making process. To add this late in the second session and just one year into EPL seems like a poor way and poor timing to make changes.

Additionally, there are many details missing that were the subject of negotiation on EPL regarding carryover of time and payout upon cessation of employment, to name a few. Also, "restaurant" isn't defined. We don't know who this would apply to—stores with prepared foods, quick serve, cafeterias? It is unclear.

Restaurants typically operate on one of the lowest profit margins (4-6%). Revenue for 2021 is just 2.6% over 2019 (the last "normal" year so it is a fairer comparison than with 2020), however, inflation has increased 9% over that same time period. Combine that with the losses from 2020, and restaurants overall are genuinely struggling to stay in business. Now is not the time to do anything that could jeopardize this industry and the livelihoods of those who depend on it—employers and employees.

Thank you for your consideration of this testimony.

The Maine Tourism Association is a private, non-profit organization. MTA has been serving members statewide in every type of tourism business such as restaurants, lodging, retail, amusements, camps and campgrounds, historical and cultural attractions, and guides and tours since 1922.