

CLAC MEMORANDUM/TESTIMONY  
LD 553 (Opposed in Part)

TO: Senator Denise Tepler  
Representative Allison Hepler  
Joint Standing Committee on Marine Resources

FR: Criminal Law Advisory Commission (CLAC)\*  
c/o [laura.yustak@maine.gov](mailto:laura.yustak@maine.gov)

RE: LD 553, An Act to Assert State Sovereignty over Ocean Waters and Marine Resources up to 12 Nautical Miles off the State's Coast

DA: March 6, 2025

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The Criminal Law Advisory Commission respectfully submits the following testimony regarding LD 553.

Persons and shipping in the waters beyond three nautical miles are subject to a complex mix of state and federal regulatory and criminal jurisdiction. CLAC objects to LD 563 to the extent that it goes beyond fisheries regulation and extends the State's general criminal jurisdiction to 12 nautical miles. CLAC is concerned that this legislation extends the reach of Maine's criminal statutes without addressing questions of whether there is a need or resources available to do so.

CLAC members do not have expertise in the areas of fisheries regulation and defer to agencies and persons with experience in those areas to address any potential conflicts between this proposal and existing federal laws governing fisheries management, regulation of vessels, and natural resources beyond the three-mile limit.

\*CLAC is an advisory body established by the Legislature. 17-A M.R.S. §§ 1351-1357. It consists of 9 members appointed by the Attorney General. Our current members include current defense attorneys, prosecutors, Maine Bar Counsel, and a retired practitioner with experience as defense counsel, prosecutor and in court administration. In addition, three sitting judges and one retired practitioner, appointed by the Chief Justice of the Supreme Judicial Court, and, by statute, the Co-Chairs of the Legislature's Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety, serve as consultants. The Supreme Judicial Court's Criminal Process Manager serves as liaison from the Court to CLAC. CLAC advises the Legislature on matters relating to crimes in the Criminal Code and in other Titles, the Bail and Juvenile Codes, and with respect to other statutes related to criminal justice processes.