

May 12, 2023

Senator Nangle, Representative Stover, members of the Committee on State and Local Government, I'm Anthony Holzhauser and I'm testifying on my own time in support of LD 1854, An Act to Complete and Implement the Comprehensive Review of the Classification and Compensation System for Executive Branch Employees, sponsored by Representative Drew Gattine.

I work for the Department of Marine Resources: Bureau of Sea Run Fisheries as a seasonal employee from April to Oct, and then as a contract from Dec to April. I have been with Sea Run for 4 years now, and I feel like I have a unique perspective relating specifically to retention of staff and a pay gap. The crew that I work with in the summertime stocks river herring and shad, conducts beach seine surveys, and attempts to tag striped bass. In order to train someone how to operate a stocking truck, boat, trailer, etc. properly and safely it takes pretty much a whole field season, maybe even two. If we want to split our crews up into two teams to tag and seine, we need to be able to trust that each crew will be safe and know what to do. Every year, we lose one, two, or sometimes all three members of our field crew because they're not getting paid enough, have no benefits, and/or don't want to work seasonally. Receiving more money in our budget could help with creating some year-round positions for these people. This, in turn, will help us to monitor our state's sea run fish with more accuracy and care.

I have recently also been looking at other options in the public and private sector. I love what I do with sea run fisheries, and my family is also proud of what I have helped to accomplish. But, when I tell anyone what I make, it kind of becomes embarrassing. I feel as though I'm not making what I am worth for the work I do, and it is not a pleasant feeling. ANY job that I can find in the public and/ or private sector starts at more than I currently make, will provide me with full benefits and a paycheck year-round. I don't want to leave my position, but I'm starting to feel as though I have to if I want to still be able to provide for my family.

I know this is a short testimony, but I care enough about this that I felt like at least if I could find time to write anything then it would be worth it. I hope you consider my testimony when making your decision. Thank you for your time.