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April 29, 2025

*Testimony of Representative Holly Eaton in support of*  
**LD 1731: An Act to Increase the Influence of the**  
**Maine State Ferry Advisory**  
*Before the Joint Standing Committee on Transportation*

Senator Nangle, Representative Crafts, and members of the Transportation Committee,

For the record, my name is Holly Eaton, and I represent House District 15, which includes Deer Isle, Stonington, Isle au Haut, Frenchboro, Swan's Island, Vinalhaven, Brooklin, Tremont, and Southwest Harbor.

I rise today in support of LD 1731, which strengthens the voice of island communities by requiring the Maine State Ferry Service to consult with the Ferry Advisory Board on key funding and operational decisions.

Before submitting our ferry-related bills this session, many of us representing islands in the 132nd Legislature met to discuss shared concerns about the Maine State Ferry Service. Together, we developed a coordinated set of proposals, designed not to compete with one another, but to give the Transportation Committee the opportunity to fully hear and consider the breadth of our island constituents' experiences.

While some of the bills may sound similar, that was intentional. Our goal was to present different pathways for the committee to explore, all aiming toward the same destination: a more accountable, reliable, and responsive ferry service for Maine's islands.

LD 1731 takes an important step toward this goal by ensuring that the Ferry Advisory Board — made up of representatives from the very communities most impacted by ferry operations — has a stronger, more formalized role in shaping decisions.

District 15: Brooklin, Deer Isle, Eagle Island Township, Frenchboro, Southwest Harbor, Stonington, Swan's Island, Tremont, Isle au Haut, Vinalhaven

For communities like Swans Island, Frenchboro, and Vinalhaven, ferry service is not an optional convenience. It is the connection to schools, medical care, jobs, groceries, and family. Decisions about routes, fares, schedules, and vessel needs must be made *with* our islands, not *about* them.

I urge the committee to support LD 1731 and to continue listening closely to the voices of islanders who depend on the ferry system every single day. Thank you for your consideration, and I am happy to answer any questions.

Holly Eaton  
House District 15  
LD 1731

Uploading as I don't see it in the record.