

Dear Members of the Transportation Committee,

I write in support of **LD 1231**.

If you live on an un-bridged island, the ferry is your highway. It is not a luxury, it is a necessity. All goods produced on the island must leave via the ferry, and all needs including groceries, fuel and sometimes mail must come on the ferry.

It may look like an enjoyable outing on a calm summer day as you approach the magical harbor, it is quite a different experience in the dead of winter, with frozen spray coming over the bow of a rolling and pitching boat.

We are all indeed fortunate to have Lifeflight available, for the most serious illnesses requiring advanced care, weather permitting. When the weather prevents flight the ferry is essential to get injured or ill islanders to care in relative comfort and safety. This too is not a luxury but essential medical care for all who live on these un-bridged islands.

As many of you may know, Maine has the oldest population in the country. Per capita, Vinalhaven has one of the oldest populations in the state. It is shocking to see our elders having to leave their vehicle, because they are forbidden to have the comfort of heat, struggling up the metal stairs or ,if courageous, attempting to use the elevator, which is often out of service. This winter I saw a frail, elderly couple with their canes trying without success to open the elevator door. I summoned the crew who managed to break the ice and open the door. Who designs a boat with no seating on the deck? **I support LD 1731 and LD 1680** in the hope more ferry advisory and oversight committees input will result in boats that suit the needs and comfort of our residents.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to share my concerns and views,

Elin Elisofon
Vinalhaven