

LD1731 An Act to Increase the Influence of the Maine State Ferry Advisory Board on the Funding and Operations of the Maine State Ferry Service

Testimony in Support

April 29, 2025

Senator Nangle, Representative Crafts, and members of the Transportation Committee, my name is Kimberly Grindle and I am a resident of Islesboro. I am submitting this letter today to express my support for LD 1731: An Act to Increase the Influence of the Maine State Ferry Advisory Board on the Funding and Operations of the Maine State Ferry Service

As a life-long resident of Islesboro and a small island business owner, I see firsthand how vital the Maine State Ferry Service is to island communities. Ferries for year-round residents are not a luxury they are a lifeline. They ensure access to essential services like healthcare, education, employment, and supplies. They also sustain tourism and local economies. However, the decisions about how this system is funded, scheduled, and operated often feel disconnected from the realities of island life and sometimes leave islanders feeling as though our voices are not heard during the decision-making processes.

LD 1731 is a commonsense bill that takes an important step toward aligning the Maine State Ferry Service with the communities it serves. By increasing the advisory board's role in decision-making—particularly in funding and operational planning—the bill recognizes the deep local knowledge and lived experience of island residents.

Too often, decisions are made without adequate input from those most impacted. Or are made with disregard to the input provided from island communities. This leads to impractical schedules, unexpected fee hikes, and service interruptions that destabilize island life. LD 1731 will ensure that island voices are heard—early, consistently, and meaningfully—when it comes to policies that shape their future.

Islanders are asking to be true partners in making this system work. LD 1731 honors that spirit and makes our ferry system more responsive, equitable, and sustainable for everyone.

I respectfully urge the committee to vote **“Ought to Pass”** on LD 1731.

Thank you for your time and for supporting Maine's island communities.

Sincerely,

Kimberly Grindle