

**Testimony of Gabriel Pendleton**  
**Joint Standing Committee on Transportation**  
**LD 947, An Act To Clarify Overnight Docking At Mainland Ports For Certain Island Ferry Vessels**  
**LD 1231, An Act Requiring Ferries To Dock Overnight On Certain Islands For Emergency**  
**Purposes**

April 29, 2025

Senator Nangle, Representative Crafts, and Distinguished Members of the Committee on Transportation, I am Gabriel Pendleton, I am a resident of Islesboro, alternate member for Islesboro on the Ferry Service Advisory Board, and regular rider on the Maine State Ferry Service trip between Lincolnville and Islesboro. I write now to express **my support for LDs 1231 and 947** which seek to clarify the nighttime berthing location of certain MSFS ferries including the Islesboro ferry.

DOT Commissioner Bruce Van Note has expressed his desire to have ferries remain on the mainland at night. For reference, currently the Islesboro ferry is berthed on the island from 5:30PM until 7:30AM the next morning. The Commissioner's stated goal with this policy is to retain and hire new crew members. This is undoubtedly a laudable goal which all Islands support. However, shortly after the Commissioner expressed support for this policy the union that represents our ferry crews took a poll among active crew members and more than half would quit if this policy were implemented, please see the attached survey.

Staffing issues aside, there are other concerns about berthing ferries away from their island ports. Representatives from my community's EMS, Fire, and Public Safety departments have expressed concern about changes to emergency response protocols and potential delays if boats are berthed off island. Examples of emergency situations which require ferry trips include: mutual aid fire trucks coming to respond to a large fire; forestry equipment to fight a forest fire; State or Federal law enforcement to respond to a myriad of public safety emergencies; ambulances and medical staff needed to respond to a mass casualty event. Further, concerns about berthing location are different for each island served by the MSFS as some are further away from their mainland port, some have two boats, some have less protected harbors, etc.

All that is to say, the decision to change the berthing locations of ferries is not as simple as it sounds and should not be taken lightly. The impact of such a policy change should be made as part of a major substantive rule change after careful consideration and input from all islands and other stakeholders. This will achieve better policy and community buy in from the islands.

Thank you for your consideration.