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Hi, my name is Andy Whitman and I'm a resident of Swan's Island, Maine - an island off the coast of Mount Desert Island, served by the Maine State Ferry Service. I, and many residents have been discussing our great concern with this legislation and the Department of Transportation's desire to begin overnighting their ferries on the mainland, instead of the islands they serve.

This poses 2 substantial problems for the island communities these ferries are charged to serve.

First, this change would eliminate a critical round trip each day. Ferries starting and ending their day on the island ensure that residents can travel to and from the mainland in the early morning and late afternoon. Overnighting ferries on the mainland means the first trip to the island essentially becomes positioning service—stranding residents without early access to work, school, medical care, or connecting transport. On Swan's Island, this effectively removes 1.5 hours a resident can be on the mainland during the day - making off island employment near impossible, and making access to medical services incredibly difficult.

Second, this change would undermine the ferry's role as a lifeline during emergencies. When ferries are docked at the island overnight, they are available to transport emergency personnel, evacuate patients, and respond to critical needs. Without that presence, island residents lose precious response time in situations where every minute matters.

This proposal prioritizes operational convenience over community safety and access. The state's ferries are not just transportation—they are infrastructure, emergency response, and daily life support for islanders. Please preserve their commitment to the communities they exist to serve.