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*Testimony of Representative Holly Eaton in support of*  
**LD 1756 – An Act to Establish a Statewide Transportation Project Selection  
Prioritization Process**  
*Joint Standing Committee on Transportation*

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

My name is Representative Holly Eaton, and I represent House District 15, which includes the island and coastal communities of Deer Isle, Stonington, Brooklin, Tremont, Southwest Harbor, Frenchboro, Swan's Island, Isle au Haut, and Vinalhaven.

I'm submitting this testimony in support of LD 1756 because I believe a transparent and equitable process for prioritizing transportation projects is critical to ensuring that rural, coastal, and island communities receive the attention and investment they need. In my district, reliable ferry service, marine terminals, bridges, and causeways are essential infrastructure—not just for transportation, but for economic survival, healthcare access, and community resilience.

Historically, the absence of a clearly defined prioritization framework has left some of our most essential transportation needs sidelined. A data-driven model that includes regional equity and community impact as core components would help ensure that infrastructure serving small or geographically isolated populations is not overlooked in favor of higher-traffic areas. I'm especially encouraged by the bipartisan support behind this bill and its potential to deliver long-term benefits across the state.

I urge the committee and the Department of Transportation to ensure that any prioritization criteria developed under this legislation directly address the needs of Maine's island and coastal communities. These areas are not only vulnerable to the impacts of climate change and extreme weather, but also face unique logistical challenges when it comes to maintenance, materials

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

delivery, and long-term planning. The ferry system, in particular, demands more consistent attention and strategic investment than it currently receives.

LD 1756 offers a pathway toward smarter, more transparent transportation planning—and I believe it can help ensure that the needs of all Mainers, regardless of geography, are taken seriously. Thank you for your time, and for your commitment to equitable infrastructure planning.