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**Testimony of Captain Hugh Mitchell in Support of  
LD 1874 An Act to Enable the Maine Pilotage Commission to Oversee Pilots Operating in  
Portland Harbor**

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Dear Senator Nangle, Representative Crafts, and Members of the Transportation Committee, I am pleased to provide testimony today in support of LD 1874, An Act to Enable the Maine Pilotage Commission to Oversee Pilots Operating in Portland Harbor. I believe this bill represents an important step to ensure the long-term safety of the Portland of Portland.

For background, my name is Captain Hugh Mitchell, and I have owned and operated the charter fishing and harbor tour vessel “LiveLiner” out of South Portland, Maine since 2014. I spend nearly every day on the waters of Casco Bay from mid-May through mid-October. I cannot express how fortunate the Port of Portland is to have such a professional group of trained pilots, as they are responsible for safely navigating the largest vessels in and out of the harbor in all weather, year round. Having said that, I am concerned about the increasing amount of time the pilots in Portland have spent over the past 10 years advocating to maintain a successful pilot service. Their main goal of safely navigating ships seems to become more and more clouded with managerial tasks related to the Portland Harbor Commission. It concerns me to see this shift in focus, and I feel they would be best suited to being regulated by the Maine Pilotage Commission, which is an oversight body made up of industry professionals and people with maritime experience.

Over the years, I have attended and monitored the meetings of the Portland Harbor Commission and Maine Pilotage Commission, and I can attest to the level of expertise and professionalism seen at the Maine Pilotage Commission. In my experience, the Maine Pilotage Commission is fair and professional. They understand how to set pilotage rates, and they do so fairly and efficiently. By contrast, Portland Harbor Commission has not been governed by individuals with knowledge of pilotage or rate-setting, and as a consequence, their process is inefficient, cumbersome, and inordinately time-consuming.

The pilots in Portland Harbor play a crucial role in both the safety of the waters and the movement of goods in and around Portland Harbor. The vast majority of goods are transported by sea, and this couldn’t occur safely without pilots. Ensuring that sea pilots in Portland are regulated by the most qualified individuals will increase safety and improve the reliability of the movement of goods. I hope you consider these comments, and I respectfully request that you support this bill.