

**Testimony in Support of LD 1433, Resolve, to Establish a Working Waterfront
Infrastructure Engineer Corps Pilot Program and to Conduct a Feasibility Study of a
Higher Education Service Corps Program**

**To the Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs
by Josh Caldwell, Climate and Clean Energy Policy Advocate for NRCM
April 24, 2025**

Senator Rafferty, Representative Murphy, and distinguished members of the Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs, my name is Josh Caldwell, and I am here on behalf of the Natural Resources Council of Maine (NRCM) in support of LD 1433, Resolve, to Establish a Working Waterfront Infrastructure Engineer Corps Pilot Program and to Conduct a Feasibility Study of a Higher Education Service Corps Program. NRCM is Maine's leading nonpartisan membership organization dedicated to protecting Maine's environment, with nearly 20,000 supporters statewide and beyond.

NRCM has been supportive of Volunteer Maine and AmeriCorps programming for many years. Service corps are proven tools to support communities, generate local economic activity, and support young people in their pursuit of service-oriented careers. This legislation would provide an opportunity to complete important service projects where Maine has the most need and establish the foundation of future service corps expansion. [A recent review](#) of AmeriCorps program efficacy conservatively estimated an average \$2.02 return for each dollar invested in AmeriCorps projects and found that AmeriCorps participants, on average, are 27% more likely to find a job after service than non-participants. The benefit of a service corps program to participants and the communities they serve is evident.

As was demonstrated by the severe storms in January of last year that resulted in 60% of Maine's working waterfront being damaged or destroyed, the need for waterfront resilience cannot be overstated. As climate change progresses, the need for infrastructure support on our working waterfronts will only increase.

This service corps proposal would provide ample opportunity for Mainers, particularly our state's youth, to engage with our state, our environment, and our education system in a substantive and rewarding way. This would help with promoting youth retention in state, encouraging continued long-term engagement with Maine's natural resources, and growing a culture of stewardship that will be needed to preserve our state's beauty and productivity for

generations to come. An analysis of Americorps members in Maine from 1994 to 2021 shows that 34% of respondents moved to Maine for service, and more than half of those stayed after their program due to ties developed in state.

Further, Maine can only draw down funding for programs if they are established, and creating these programs would allow Maine to take advantage of future funding opportunities to channel funds effectively to valuable efforts. The service corps programs recommended in this legislation would provide eligibility for Maine to take advantage of funding opportunities and conduct beneficial work that otherwise would not be able to happen.

For these reasons, we urge the Committee to vote Ought to Pass. Thank you for your consideration.