

## STATEMENT

Dr. William J. Brennan, President

Maine Maritime Academy

January 27, 2021

Senators Breen and Daughtry, Representatives Pierce and Brennan, and members of the Joint Standing Committees for Appropriations and Financial Affairs, and Education and Cultural Affairs:

My name is Bill Brennan, President of Maine Maritime Academy, and it is my pleasure to be here today to speak in support of the recommended level of General Fund support to Maine Maritime Academy in the Supplemental Appropriations measure for FY 21. If we can hold our state funding at current levels, I can assure you that we will do our utmost to build upon the positive developments which have been realized in past years.

The Governor's curtailment supplemental budget reduces MMA's baseline funding for FY 21 by \$92,141 or approximately 1% and sets the adjusted FY21 baseline at a 2018 funding level. In addition, \$232,754 in resources proposed by Governor Mills last January to cover increases in collective bargaining costs for FY21 were not adopted by the legislature before adjournment of the 129<sup>th</sup>.

We appreciate the extraordinary efforts of the Governor to rebalance the FY21 budget without a more significant cut in funding to Maine Maritime Academy.

Maine Maritime Academy has consistently ranked in national studies among the top colleges and universities for returning value on the higher education investment, offering unique and important educational opportunities to the citizens of Maine. The Academy specializes in marine-oriented education at the undergraduate and graduate levels, with a curriculum emphasizing engineering, management, science and transportation. Students in many of our programs also receive specialized training which prepares them for careers in the U.S. Merchant Marine or the uniformed services of the United States.

Our enrollment is below capacity due to the economic downturn which means fewer and fewer young Maine women and men are able to benefit from our unique, hands-on, educational philosophy and our reputation as one of the top undergraduate colleges of engineering in the country. Despite the challenges we are all confronting now, professional placement rates for our students remain very strong. Most of our students choose from multiple employment opportunities in their chosen fields prior to graduation.

These accomplishments have not come without some sacrifice due to the financial challenges facing all public educational institutions in the State during the past few years. While the Academy's General Fund Appropriations have remained relatively unchanged for the past several bienniums, our costs have continued to increase and we have approached the point of diminishing returns in adapting our antiquated buildings to contemporary purposes. We are appreciative that during the last Legislature, there were efforts to help us address some of the obstacles we confront with facilities and hopefully this year we can develop productive solutions.

Thank you for your time and consideration regarding the recommended biennial funding for the Academy. I would be happy to attempt to answer any questions you may have at this time – or, later during Committee work sessions if that is your preference.