

**Testimony of Douglas A. Farnham, Commissioner, Department of Defense,
Veterans and Emergency Management**

**BEFORE THE JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND
PUBLIC SAFETY**

LD 1278, "An Act To End the Maine Information and Analysis Center Program"

April 12, 2021

Good Morning Senator Deschambault, Representative Warren and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety. My name is Doug Farnham and I am Commissioner of the Department of Defense, Veterans and Emergency Management. I am providing testimony in my role as the Governor's Homeland Security Advisor and here in opposition to LD 1278, An Act To End the Maine Information and Analysis Center Program.

While you will hear plenty of testimony related to the law enforcement contributions and value, I would like to point out the importance of the MIAC relative to Homeland Security efforts in our state and nationally. Just this week the National Governors' Association hosted the Spring Conference of the Governors Homeland Security Advisor Council. The Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security, Secretary Mayorkas, addressed the Council. He discussed how his security strategy prioritizes collaboration and that fusion centers (MIAC) are key in that effort. He said, "I am a big believer in fusion centers." In particular, the challenges we see from domestic violent extremists requires that information be shared both from the national level down to states and local officials and, from local agencies up through the state and to the federal government. Information must be shared both to insure all the necessary agencies are both prepared for and alerted to potential threats. He said we need to rely heavily on fusion centers.

Describing the current threat environment, DHS Assistant Secretary for Counterterrorism and Emerging Threats, John Cohen said we currently face a more dynamic, more volatile, and more complex environment than after 9/11. Protecting our citizens and critical infrastructure from terrorism, cyber-attacks and other threats requires information sharing at all levels of government. Today's challenges require more sharing, not less. Without an effective MIAC, Maine would be putting its citizens and the entire national information sharing infrastructure at risk.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak on this important subject and stand by to answer your questions regarding my testimony. In the Maine National Guard, our people are our most valuable resource.