



April 25, 2023

**Testimony in Support of LD 1634**  
**An Act to Grant Municipalities the Authority to Set Certain Lower**  
**Motor Vehicle Speed Limits Without a Department of**  
**Transportation Speed Study**

Greetings Chairs Chipman and Williams and the distinguished members of the Committee on Transportation:

My name is James Tassé, and I am the assistant director of the Bicycle Coalition of Maine (BCM). Our mission is to make Maine better and safer for bicycling and walking. On behalf of our more than 20,000 members and supporters, I am submitting this testimony in support of LD 1634 “An Act to Grant Municipalities the Authority to Set Certain Lower Motor Vehicle Speed Limits Without a Department of Transportation Speed Study.”

The Bicycle Coalition of Maine is the statewide organization that advocates for bicyclists and pedestrians. We work to make Maine better for bicycling and walking, and to protect the safety and rights of vulnerable users of the public ways.

The BCM frequently hears complaints from Maine citizens about the threat posed by speeding traffic on residential roads and downtown streets. These complaints are often driven by frustration that their town will not reduce the speed limits, but municipalities in Maine have extremely limited authority to change speed limits. Even spot changes in speed limits on local roads require a MaineDOT study. And because the DOT methodology emphasizes 85th percentile speeds in setting speed limits, if a study shows that 85th percentile speeds exceed the posted limit, the posted speed limit may actually be increased.

Like LD 527, a bill you considered just last week, LD 1634 would return to local government and law enforcement a certain amount of authority to reduce speed limits on certain low speed roadways without a formal MaineDOT speed study.

The roads in question must be low speed to begin with—posted 35mph or less—so that posted reductions will not create hazardous speed differentials between drivers. Lowering the speed limit of a road from 35 to 25 mph, or from 30-20 mph, is a modest adjustment to an already relatively low speed context.



Roads eligible under this law would also have to be in designated business, residential, or designated growth areas under Title 30-A, section 4301, subsection 6-C.

LD 1634 also clarifies that a municipality make “physical changes” to the road, including traffic calming measures such as speed tables, curb extensions, and flex posts, to reinforce the lower speed limits on these roads.

Most importantly, LD 1634 would permit municipalities to exercise this limited authority without having to take on the burden of managing speeds on every road in their jurisdiction.

BCM believes that LD 1634 gives municipalities an appropriately limited authority to manage speeding on their roadways by permitting specific, situational reduction of speed limits in certain contexts. It will restore a measure of local control to one of a communities’ most important shared assets: neighborhood streets.

BCM urges an Ought to Pass vote on this bill.

Thank you for your time and service to the people of Maine.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "James Tassé". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

James Tassé  
Assistant Director  
Bicycle Coalition of Maine

James Tasse  
Bicycle Coalition of Maine  
LD 1634

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