



Before the Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology
October, 30 2025

Testimony of Chris Hodgdon on behalf of Comcast

An Act to Eliminate the ConnectMaine Authority by Repealing the Advanced Technology Infrastructure Act

Senator Lawrence, Representative Sachs, honorable members of the Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology.

Thank you for the opportunity to offer the following testimony on LD 1975 and specifically Comcast's support for repealing MRSA 35-A subsection 9211 which imposes a .25% gross receipts tax on Communications Service Provider services and a \$.10 per line per month fee on wireline, wireless and VoIP customer lines. In existence since 2005 and 2019 respectively Comcast submits that it is time to cease collecting these funds from consumers.

My name is Chris Hodgdon. I am Comcast's Vice President of Government Affairs here in Maine. Comcast Cable serves 20 Maine communities in the Mid Coast region, from Freeport to Woolwich and along the New Hampshire border from Kittery to Sanford. We currently offer our gigabit broadband, video, voice and mobile services to more than 75,700 Maine homes, businesses and institutions including the public sector through our Xfinity and Comcast Business brands. In the last three years Comcast has invested more than \$91.9 million in capital expenditure to enhance and extend our network, invest in our employees and pay taxes and fees to various government entities. In this time frame, we have extended our network to over 13,000 additional homes, businesses and public institutions including major projects in Lebanon, Shapleigh, Acton and Newfield. Additionally, Comcast has partnered with the Maine Connectivity Authority (MCA) to reach economically infeasible to serve locations which lacked broadband access through its ReachME program and has provisionally been awarded Broadband, Equity, Access and Deployment (BEAD) Program funds. Despite the end of federal funding for the Affordable Connectivity Program Comcast has maintained its commitment to affordability by continuing to enhance its Internet Essentials program for low income households. Since its inception in 2010 over 4800 Mainers have been connected to the Internet through this innovative program.

Comcast believes that now is the right time to sunset these fees for the following reasons:

- The goal of ensuring that any Mainer who wanted broadband has access to broadband has been accomplished. Private sector investment and partnership with the Maine Connectivity Authority and its predecessor the ConnectME Authority have reduced the number of unserved and underserved locations dramatically in just a few short years. With the provisional award of \$48M of the state's \$272M BEAD allocation, the final 23,000 underserved and unserved locations will be served.
- These fees were created many years ago, in the case of the ConnectME Fee nearly two decades ago. At that time Maine's forward-looking approach to deploying broadband to uneconomical locations was unique and funding couldn't begin to meet the need. We supported that effort as a reasonable and pragmatic way to solve a real problem. Today, massive federal resources including \$272 million in BEAD funding, well over \$125 million in Capital Project Fund dollars and a state bond supporting broadband deployment have become available.
- More than \$9M has been provided to communities and the MCA for the purposes of planning and administrative functions. The funds needed to ensure that MCA can administer and manage these grant programs through to their conclusion are already available to the authority.
- These fees have always been unevenly applied in a manner that is not competitively neutral. Since its inception the ConnectME fee has only applied to wireless providers in the event they voluntarily opt into collecting and remitting the fee. To Comcast's knowledge no such provider has done so. Further, the \$.10 per line fee does not apply to prepaid wireless transactions, creating an inequity with competing voice services.

Thank you for your time and attention to this testimony we look forward to working members of the Legislature, the Maine Connectivity Authority and interested stakeholders as this legislation is considered. Please do not hesitate to reach out with any questions.

Maine

We have invested **\$91.9 million** in Maine, including capital expenditures, employee wages and benefits, taxes and fees, and nonprofit giving in the last three years.

80

Employees in Maine, as of 2023.

\$45.7M

Technology and infrastructure investments in Maine in the last three years, including upgrades to our network.

\$20.1M

Invested in payroll, benefits, and training for our Maine workforce in the last three years.

4,800

Cumulative total low-income Maine residents in 1,200 homes connected to the Internet through Internet Essentials since 2011.

Top Counties

Top counties by Internet Essentials-connected residents (cumulative since 2011) include:

Sagadahoc 2K
 Cumberland 1K
 York 1K

56%

of Internet Essentials customers nationwide say they lacked Internet access at home before signing up for service from Comcast.

Source: 2023 Internet Essentials Annual Customer Survey



Construction is underway in Lebanon, where Comcast crews are working to expand our full suite of Xfinity and Comcast Business services to more than 3,000 additional homes and businesses by the end of 2024.



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