

To: Senator Nangle, Representative Stover, and Members of the Joint Standing Committee on State and Local Government

From: Bradley Sawyer, Deputy Director

Date: March 2, 2023

Re: Testimony in Support of L.D. 422, An Act to Eliminate the Requirement That Municipalities Provide Public Notice in Newspapers

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Senator Nangle, Representative Stover, and Members of the Joint Standing Committee on State and Local Government thank you for allowing the Maine Rural Water Association the opportunity to provide testimony on L.D. 422, An Act to Eliminate the Requirement That Municipalities Provide Public Notice in Newspapers.

The Maine Rural Water Association is a member-driven non-profit organization based in Richmond that specializes in training, technical assistance, and advocacy on behalf of our almost 300 members. The majority of our membership is made up of water and wastewater utilities from around the state and are committed to ensuring clean and safe drinking water and a healthy environment through the proper treatment of wastewater.

Consumer-owned water and wastewater utilities are tied to each other in a plethora of ways while remaining subject to different rules from separate state agencies. Wastewater utilities are overseen by the Department of Environmental Protection while water utilities are responsible to the Drinking Water Program, part of the Center for Disease Control, Department of Health and Human Services, and the Public Utilities Commission. The Public Utilities Commission has already taken some steps to remove some newspaper posting requirements for water utilities and supporting this legislation would level that playing field for municipally run wastewater utilities.

We would also respectfully suggest that the language should be amended to specifically note that this change apply to quasi-municipal entities as well. It seems unfair to ask consumer owned utilities to play by a different set of rules just because their governing board is comprised of trustees instead of councilors or selectpersons. We believe that as the world, including Maine, continues to move forward with the digital revolution that this bill presents an opportunity for municipalities to save money and have a larger and quicker reach to their constituents.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at [Bradley.Sawyer@MaineRWA.org](mailto:Bradley.Sawyer@MaineRWA.org) of 207-737-9014.