

## **Testimony of the Maine Municipal Association**

### **In Opposition to**

### ***LD 1109, RESOLUTION, Proposing an Amendment to the Constitution of Maine to Create Consistent Election Dates for Citizen-initiated Referenda in Even-numbered Election Years***

**March 27, 2023**

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Senator Hickman, Representative Supica and members of the Veterans and Legal Affairs Committee, my name is Rebecca Lambert, and I am providing testimony in opposition to LD 1109 on behalf of the Maine Municipal Association's (MMA) elected 70-member Legislative Policy Committee (LPC). For reference, the LPC provides direction to the advocacy team at MMA and establishes the position on bills of municipal interest.

Maine is one of 23 states and one territory that support citizen-led referenda and has a strong history supporting participatory democracy. While the intent to streamline elections is a measure the LPC fully encourages and supports, municipal officials share concern for changing the constitution to codify a timeline for which citizen-led initiatives can be moved forward.

Citizen-led initiatives have been around in Maine since 1908 and provide an avenue for residents to bring issues of importance to the legislature utilizing a specific set of guidelines. This important piece of direct democracy that Mainers enjoy provides the needed checks and balances to our democratic system. By limiting access to this method of participation, it undermines that system and only serves to make it more difficult for citizens to get a measure onto the ballot and to make our state less democratic.

The LPC urges this committee to trust the people of Maine and consider voting ought not to pass on LD 1109. Thank you for your time and for considering the municipal perspective on this issue.