



## CITY OF CARIBOU, MAINE

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April 24, 2023

Joint Standing Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs  
Senator Margaret Rotundo, Chair  
Representative Melanie Sachs, Chair  
C/O Office of Fiscal and Program Review  
5 State House Station  
Augusta, Maine 04333

Re: Letter of Support for LD 1457, An Act to Authorize a General Fund Bond Issue for a Jail in Caribou

Dear Senator Rotundo and Representative Sachs and distinguished committee members:

In Caribou, our citizens are known to be good neighbors who answer the call to help those in need. As a municipality, we strive to be trustworthy stewards of taxpayer funds to provide the most cost-effective level of public services in our community. An example of a department who has perfected the delicate balance of those two objectives would be the men and women of the Caribou Police Department.

The Caribou Police Department is 60 miles north of the Aroostook County Jail in Houlton and has the only other holding facility in Aroostook County. Area departments bring their prisoners to Caribou to await transport to Houlton. During COVID-19 response, the County needed to have the ability to arraign those in custody remotely. Caribou PD used the booking room to double as a video conferencing suite to accommodate. Also, during the pandemic, the County Jail was often closed, and the Caribou holding facility answered the call to keep the County safe by housing prisoners. Additionally, despite the cramped working conditions, the department has a dedicated office for federal, state and county law enforcement personnel to work on their cases, make calls and do paperwork because these officers serve a large territory and Caribou is a central location.

In June 2022, Caribou voters supported a ballot question to design and build a new police station to replace the current one housed in the basement of the municipal building which was constructed in 1939 and remodeled in 1978. Replacing the holding facility as part of this construction project aligns with state objectives for increasing local resiliency so that communities are better able to withstand future disruptions like those caused by the recent pandemic. With the funds provided by this bond issue, the updated holding facility within the new police station can continue to be used by neighboring departments. Our community thanks Senator Jackson and co-sponsors Representatives Guerrette, Albert, Babin and Theriault and Senator Stewart for recognizing that this bond issue is a smart investment for the State of Maine and bringing it forward to this committee.

I thank you for your consideration of this general fund bond issue. Please reach out anytime with questions: (207) 493 – 5961 (my direct number) or [pthompson@cariboumaine.org](mailto:pthompson@cariboumaine.org).

Sincerely,

Penny Thompson, City Manager