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April 25, 2023

Senator Anne Carney  
Representative Matthew Moonen  
Committee on Judiciary  
100 State House Station, Room 438  
Augusta, ME 04333

**RE: LD 1596– An Act to Facilitate the Creation of an Aroostook County  
Drug Treatment Court**

Dear Senator Carney, Representative Moonen, and Members of the Committee on Judiciary:

MACDL provides this testimony neither in support of nor opposition to LD 1596. Instead, I write to stress the importance of Maine Treatment and Recovery Courts (TRC).

In addition to being the President of MACDL, I am also one of the defense attorney representatives assigned to the Cumberland County TRC. Many years ago, while an Assistant Attorney General, I also had the privilege of serving as the prosecutor representative to the York County TRC in addition to my regular workload. As both a prosecutor and defense attorney, I have seen firsthand the TRC's ability to effect positive change in the lives of the participants and the communities they are part of.

Unfortunately, Aroostook County has been impacted like so many other counties with substance use, arguably more so than some others. Maine created its first Adult Drug TRC in August 2000 and began accepting participants in April 2001. In the last 22 years, there has never been a TRC in Aroostook County. For me, it has always been unclear why a TRC has not existed in one of the counties that could stand to benefit the most. As a lawyer and a Maine citizen, I find the lack of a TRC in Aroostook County astounding.

“The mission of Maine’s TRC’s is to enhance public safety by reducing recidivism with respect to crimes primarily related to substance use or mental health issues; to hold participants accountable for their behavior; and to increase the likelihood of participants entering a recovery lifestyle through intensive judicial supervision, case management, peer support, and specialized treatment for substance use or mental health disorders.” See Maine TRC’s Policy and Procedure Manual: <https://www.courts.maine.gov/courts/treatment/mtrc-policy-manual.pdf>.

It is unclear whether an appropriation of the type contemplated by LD 1596 is *necessary* to implement a TRC in Aroostook County. Whether the District Attorney's Office in its current form is understaffed and unable to absorb extra duties associated with attending weekly staffing meetings and weekly TRC obligations is unknown to me, and I would defer to the Maine Prosecutor's Association and District Attorney Todd Collins on that point. To the extent that such an appropriation is determined to be necessary to move forward with creation of an Aroostook TRC, then MACDL would support LD 1596.

We look forward to the day when there are well-funded and staffed TRC's in *all* of Maine's counties.

Thank you for allowing MACDL to address this important issue.

Sincerely,

*/s/ Amber L. Tucker*  
Amber L. Tucker  
President