



Shawn D. Gillen, Sheriff  
Joey Seeley, Chief Deputy

Patrol

Transportation

Corrections

Civil Process

**TESTIMONY OF Shawn D. Gillen  
Sheriff**

**AROOSTOOK COUNTY  
IN SUPPORT OF**

**LD 1889 An Act to Provide Authorization to Aroostook County to Use the Statewide Radio and Network System**

**STATE OF MAINE LEGISLATURE  
COMMITTEE ON ENERGY, UTILITY & TECHNOLOGY**

**Senator Lawrence, Representative Zeigler & Honorable Members of the Committee:**

**My name is Shawn Gillen, and I am a resident of Blaine and serve as the Sheriff of Aroostook County. I submit this written testimony supporting LD 1889, "An Act to Provide Authorization to Aroostook County to Use the Statewide Radio and Network System."**

**LD 1889 will allow the County of Aroostook to access state-owned tower sites and existing building structures.**

**LD 1889 will allow the Aroostook County Sheriff's Office to use the statewide radio and network system, specifically tower sites and structures that house equipment. These state-owned tower sites are already established in Aroostook. They would enhance our radio communication capabilities in one of Maine's most rural and remote counties. They will provide a level of safety to emergency services and public protection that we cannot offer at this time. The Aroostook County Dispatch Center provides services not only to our own rural patrol deputies and corrections transport but also to local police, fire, and ambulance service providers and municipalities from the top of Aroostook to the bottom and parts of northern Washington and Penobscot Counties.**

**Aroostook County is utilizing nearly \$3.5 million in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds to significantly upgrade from a three-radio tower system to a fifteen-radio tower system. These new tower sites are already in place throughout the region and will dramatically help increase our communication coverage of the County. Our coverage now is spotty, with little to no communication in areas in the north and south. We have no communication in the town of Fort Fairfield, which is a town that we often assist. Earlier in the year, we had a shooting in the Allagash. We had zero communications with other agencies and our communication center. This situation could have turned out extremely bad. This example is just one of many incidents that have happened, and why it is so essential that we move forward with this project. Our communication system should have been**

**FAITHFULLY SERVING OUR NEIGHBORS SINCE 1839**

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**Joey Seeley, Chief Deputy**

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replaced years ago, and we are fortunate no one got hurt. Upgrading our current equipment along with LD 1889 will keep this project moving forward and provide life-saving support to the public and emergency responders.

If LD 1889 did not pass, we would far exceed the 3.5 million set aside for this project. New tower sites would have to be built. Because this project is life or death, we would have no choice but to put the burden on the taxpayers of Aroostook. Doing so would make no sense since we have already paid for existing towers.

This problem is not unique to Aroostook. Some other counties and towns in Maine have also tried to utilize state-owned radio towers and have been told no. Several counties have reached out to express their concerns and support of LD 1889.

The Aroostook County Sheriff's Office expects to fund any costs associated with this project and does not expect the state to fund any part. For example, Aroostook County would fund any work studies or equipment installation needed for the project. The Sheriff's Office also intends to help the Maine Office of Information Technologies succeed in its mission, and LD 1889 would directly support that.

In closing, I thank you for considering LD 1889 and ask for your support and Ought to Pass recommendation.

**Shawn D. Gillen**

**Sheriff**

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Aroostook County Sheriff's Office  
LD 1889

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