

Testimony of Falmouth Community Television (FCTV), Michael McDade, Station Manager

In Support of LD 1967, An Act To Support Municipal Franchise Agreements

**Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology
October 24, 2023**

Senator Lawrence, Representative Ziegler and members of the Committee on Energy, Utilities, and Technology.

Falmouth Community Television is submitting testimony today as a member of Maine Community Media Association and as a local public access station that delivers information and resources to our community. We know the provisions in LD 1967, "An Act To Support Municipal Franchise Agreements" will aid municipalities and public access stations in Maine.

This bill will protect franchise fees that municipalities receive for letting video service providers use the public right of ways. And ensure that more homes are connected and received a high quality HD signal or their community PEG station.

Falmouth Community Television is a Governmental (PEG) station. We broadcast and stream government meetings and school events. Which can be viewed online after they have been aired. We have provided meaningful information and resources to our community since 1996.

During COVID we pivoted quickly, finding ways to offer remote meetings online and opportunities for residents to stay involved. As the pandemic eased, we offered hybrid meetings. An option we continue to offer today.

We would also like our signal to be shown in High Definition (HD). Everything we broadcast is created in HD. However, when it goes out on our channel, it's downconverter to a low-quality standard definition signal. When I asked about going out in HD, I was told that the town would have to pay to upgrade their equipment and then a monthly fee would be charged. This bill will address the loophole video service providers found in Public Law 245, "An Act to Ensure Nondiscriminatory Treatment of Public, Educational and Governmental Access Channels by Cable System Operators."

Please support LD 1967, An Act to Support Municipal Franchise Agreements.

Sincerely,

Michael McDade
Falmouth Community Television