

Ryan Pelletier
County of Aroostook
LD 2109

1/25/24

To The Honorable Members of the Committee,

My name is Ryan Pelletier and I am a resident of St. Agatha. I also serve as the County Administrator for Aroostook County and today I provide testimony in support of LD 2109, An Act to Maintain State Police Rural Patrol Services at 2020 Staffing Levels.

I will note that the bill summary indicates no less than 2020 staffing levels. Rural counties, like Aroostook have seen a significant increase in crime over the last several years. Conversely, we have seen a decline in the number of troopers in Aroostook County.

Just this week, Lt. Brian Harris of Troop F in Houlton met with over 40 concerned citizens in the small rural community of Patten in neighboring northern Penobscot County. At the meeting, Lt. Harris explained that there is no easy solution in an area being handled by four or fewer troopers amid staffing shortages. Lt. Harris said, and I quote, "I ran our numbers and our average response time is 45 minutes. If a trooper is on a call in Oakfield, Stacyville or on the interstate, they can't get to you." End quote. Ladies and Gentlemen this is not only scary, it should be unacceptable to all of us to think that in a time with increased crime, we are having to deal with less and less troopers. I know the workforce shortages we are all facing make it challenging to recruit and train individuals for this important work and I certainly do not blame anyone at the Maine State Police or other law enforcement agencies for this situation. I simply feel that its important that we all work together to make sure that the MSP is supported as fully as it can be and that staffing levels be maintained to a minimum standard.

In closing, I thank you for your time and consideration and reiterate my sincere hope that you will vote in favor of LD 2109.

Sincerely,
Ryan D. Pelletier
County Administrator
Aroostook County