



**MAINE MUNICIPAL
ASSOCIATION SINCE 1936**

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Testimony of the Maine Municipal Association (MMA)

In Support of Part KKK & Park N of

LD 2214, An Act to Make Supplemental Appropriations and Allocations for the Expenditures of State Government, General Fund and Other Funds and to Change Certain Provisions of the Law Necessary to the Proper Operations of State Government for the Fiscal Years Ending June 30, 2024 and June 30, 2025

February 23, 2024

Senator Rotundo, Representative Sachs, and members of the Appropriations Committee. My name is Rebecca Graham, and I am submitting written testimony in support of Part KKK and N of LD 2214 on behalf of the 70 municipal leaders who were elected by their peers to serve on the Association's Legislative Policy Committee and directed to establish MMA's position on bills of municipal interest.

Municipal leaders are especially supportive of Part KKK which will plan for and assist a statewide network for Crisis Receiving Centers in regions of Maine that will support both rural and urban communities to provide short-term mental health and substance use disorder crisis stabilization services. It is vital to make sure these programs are not predicated on measures of service linked to individual numbers served to make sure the same level of 24 hour availability and service levels truly need in all areas of the state for those in acute crisis. Many rural areas like service center areas are extremely far from each other by any other typical measure, such as Presque Isle and Caribou and the travel time alone between these two communities can be the difference between connecting someone with resources or not.

The needs exist in the same way in our more populated counties with the same urgency. For these reasons, municipal officials hope the committee will keep this appropriation intact and additionally consider including the appropriation request under LD 1857, *Resolve, to Establish a Public Safety Health and Wellness Grant Pilot Program*, sponsored by Rep. Lynn Copeland of Saco that is intended to provide the same level of culturally competent crisis specialty care and physical health resources on behalf of those who are answering the call 24 hours a day, Maine's first responders, in service of these individuals who will be served by these regional and community based crisis receiving centers.

The appropriation request for LD 1857 is also connected to Part N of the proposed supplemental budget. As this session of proposed law is a direct result of an incredibly tragic incident which found over 400 first responders across the state attending the scene to aid and address the horrific fall out, it is important to see the parity of need for those individuals who are

not covered by the fund established in Part N. Each of those responders returned to their home communities to an unequal level of resources to address their long-term needs as a result of that experience. The outline established under the Maine Mass Violence Care Fund also provides a road map for the level of need for care that exists for the same individuals who respond and mediate these types of public emergencies, and their families.

Officials urge you to consider including the LD 1857 appropriation with both these vital measures to complete the investment in state-wide health and wellness services in an inclusive and wholistic way.

Thank you for considering the municipal perspective on these issues. If you have any questions about the Association's position on these provisions of the supplemental budget bill, please do not hesitate to contact me at rgraham@memun.org or 1-800-452-8786.