



February 6, 2025

Honorable Margaret Rotundo, Chair
Honorable Drew Gattine, Chair
Joint Standing Committee on Appropriations
& Financial Affairs
Maine State Legislature
100 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333

Honorable Denise Tepler, Chair
Honorable Victoria Doudera, Chair
Joint Standing Committee on Environment
and Natural Resources
Maine State Legislature
100 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333

Re: *Support of LD 210 2026-2027 Biennial Budget funding for the Joint Environmental Training Coordinating Committee*

Dear Sen. Rotundo, Rep. Gattine, and Members of the Committee of Appropriations and Financial Affairs; Sen. Tepler, Rep. Doudera, and Members of the Committee on Environment and Natural Resources:

The Maine Water Utilities Association (MWUA) appreciates the opportunity to provide testimony in support of the budget appropriation for the Joint Environmental Training Coordinating Committee (JETCC) as part of the 2026 -2027 biennial budget.

About MWUA. MWUA is a nonprofit association based in Augusta that provides support for water works professionals throughout the State of Maine in advocating for safe drinking water through educational and technical programming as well as advocacy on the local, state, and national level. The Association was formed in 1925 and consists of approximately 86 utility and 60 associate members. Maine's water utilities provide service to approximately 700,000 Maine residents, thousands of Maine businesses and public institutions, and millions of visitors to Maine every year.

Background. JETCC was formed in 1985 to coordinate training for Maine's environmental professionals. While originally created to support clean water professionals operating the many wastewater treatment facilities in Maine the mission evolved to also support Maine's drinking water professionals who treat and deliver safe drinking water. MWUA has closely coordinated and partnered with JETCC on numerous educational initiatives over the past 25 years.

Discussion. As with many professions, the clean and drinking water professions have become more technical and complicated over the past 30 years. From advancements in equipment and treatment systems, higher regulatory standards, and increased public scrutiny, the need for education and training is always present. Additionally, the clean and drinking water professions are impacted by the Maine's older population demographics resulting in a steady exit of retirees with decades of experience. Training and education are paramount in helping new employees become contributing members of the profession.

Maine's water and wastewater utilities are generally small with limited staff (generally with 15 or fewer employees). Industry associations and training organizations, like JETCC, provide critical support for these utilities that cannot develop a comprehensive in-house training system.



Letter from MWUA re LD 210 - JETCC

February 6, 2025

Page 2

Conclusion. The limited financial support provided through the biennial budget helps to ensure JETCC can continue to deliver quality training and educational opportunities for Maine's clean and drinking water professionals at a reasonable cost. We strongly encourage the committees to support these professions by continuing to appropriate funding for JETCC.

Thank you for your consideration,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Nicki Pellenz", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Nicki Pellenz
Executive Director

cc: Roger Crouse, Chair, MWUA Legislative & Regulatory Affairs Committee
James I. Cohen, Verrill Dana, LLP, Legislative Counsel