

Testimony of the Maine Municipal Association

In Conditional Support Of*LD 873 - An Act to Expand Municipal Authority over Utility Pole Permits*

March 18, 2025

Senator Lawrence, Representative Sachs and members of the Energy, Utilities, and Technology Committee, my name is Rebecca Lambert, and I am providing testimony in “conditional” support of LD 873 on behalf of the Maine Municipal Association’s (MMA) elected 70-member Legislative Policy Committee (LPC). For reference, MMA is a nonpartisan, nonprofit member service organization and aims to help provide policy solutions that work for all residents in Maine and the LPC guides the advocacy efforts and establishes positions on bills of municipal interest.

MMA polled the members of LPC for their opinion on this bill, which generated overall support for the proposal as it expands home rule—an authority held dearly by most communities. Due to a locality’s intimate knowledge of their communities, they are best positioned to identify poles that are no longer placed in a safe location.

Although most respondents favored LD 873, it is worth noting that this bill would only benefit two additional communities, Lewiston and Bangor. To that point, our members question why limit this authority to municipalities of a certain population size and suggest eliminating the threshold all together.

This bill and the poll results will be discussed with our entire LPC on Thursday, March 20. Should the position change based on those discussions I will submit updated testimony. Thank you for your time and for considering the municipal perspective on this issue.