



**Maine Chiefs of Police Association**  
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**Statement in support of**

**L.D. 904, An Act to Exempt from Fees Certain Services Performed by the Health and Environmental Testing Laboratory for Criminal Investigations**

**Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services**

**March 24, 2025**

Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer, and honorable members of the Health and Human Services Committee. My name is Jason Moen. I am the Chief of the Auburn Police Department, and the President of the Maine Chiefs of Police Association. I am submitting testimony on behalf of the Maine Chiefs of Police Association in support of LD 904.

The mission of the Maine Chiefs of Police Association is to secure a closer official and personal relationship among Maine Police Officials; to secure a unity of action in law enforcement matters; to enhance the standards of police personnel, police training and police professionalism generally; to devise ways and means for equality of law enforcement throughout the state of Maine; to advance the prevention and detection of crime; to prescribe to the Law Enforcement Code of Ethics; and to promote the profession of law enforcement as an integral and dedicated force in today's society sworn to the protection of life and property.

One of the most critical components of a drug investigation is the ability to analyze a confiscated substance to determine its legality. Until recently, these costs were recoverable through restitution as the expense was deemed necessary as part of an investigation of criminal activity. However, in 2021, the Legislature changed what constitutes a critical investigation expense eligible for restitution. Now, the costs of these tests are only recoverable if the defendant is convicted of trafficking a scheduled drug, and the court makes a finding that the conduct underlying the conviction was motivated by profit.

Last week, the Maine Chiefs of Police Association testified before the Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee in favor of a proposal (LD 717) that would change this law to allow for the costs of these tests to be recoverable once again.

Since this new law has been in place, municipal law enforcement agencies have borne the cost of these drug analyses, which cost \$155 per test, and they are putting a financial strain on our departments. For example, in Fiscal Year 2024, the Auburn Police Department spent \$9,610 on drug testing, close to the average amount larger departments expect to incur annually for active testing years. For some of our smaller community departments that figure tends to be about half that amount, again, dependent on the testing volume.

One way to rein in these costs impacting municipal budgets is to eliminate the fee for drug analysis testing altogether. That is exactly what is proposed in LD 904. This bill includes a provision that there is no fee for the lab analysis of a substance that is suspected of being an illegal drug when such testing or analysis is conducted pursuant to a criminal investigation.

Municipal resources are stretched thin, and the costs associated with drug analyses burden tight budgets and municipal taxpayers even more. When local law enforcement units must cover the costs of these tests, other aspects of criminal investigations are impacted. Law enforcement agencies and prosecutors must decide where to spend limited resources, making it difficult to prosecute drug cases effectively. Removing the fee for these tests will eliminate the need to make these difficult decisions.

For these reasons, the Maine Chiefs of Police Association supports the passage of LD 904. We respectfully ask members of the Committee to vote Ought to Pass.