



Maine County Commissioners Association

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March 24, 2025

Sen. Joseph Baldacci, Chair
Rep. Suzanne Salisbury, Chair
Joint Standing Committee on State &
Local Government
100 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333

Re: *LD 915, An Act to Modernize Deed Duplication from Microfilm to a Digital Image*

Dear Members of the Joint Standing Committee on State and Local Government:

On behalf of the Maine County Commissioners Association, we appreciate the opportunity to provide testimony to the Committee in opposition of LD 915.

About MCCA. Briefly, the Maine County Commissioners Association was established in 1890 to assist Maine's county government in providing vital services to Maine citizens in a responsive, efficient, and credible manner. The Association is based in Augusta, represents all 16 of Maine's counties, and is governed by a board with representation from each participating county.

What does LD 915 do? This bill requires a register of deeds to make a record of an instrument recorded in the registry office in the form of a digital image stored on magnetic or optical media, not on microfilm as in current law.

Integrity of records. Under current law, a register of deeds relies on microfilm, which remains the gold standard for archival records due to its proven longevity, reliability, and authenticity. Unlike digital images, microfilm is not susceptible to data corruption, file format obsolescence, or cybersecurity threats. Microfilm records can be accessed without reliance on proprietary software or evolving digital storage systems, ensuring long-term accessibility regardless of technological advancements or failures.

We are concerned about a complete shift to digital imaging in lieu of microfilm because, while digital records offer convenience, they pose significant risks in terms of data integrity and long-term preservation. If a digital image is degraded, corrupted, or stored in an outdated format, it may become inaccessible or unrecoverable. Conversely, microfilm provides a tangible, permanent record that can be physically archived and remains readable for decades without the need for continuous migration or software updates.

MCCA Letter re LD 915

March 24, 2025

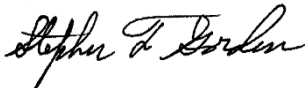
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Moreover, microfilm ensures that documents can be perfectly recreated, whereas a flawed or unclear digital image cannot be reconstructed if the original document is no longer retained. Given these factors, microfilm remains the most secure and reliable method for preserving the integrity of registry records over time.

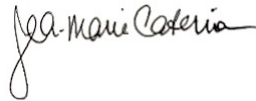
Costs. Finally, there is the question of cost. If the state is directing county registries of deeds to undertake a new act that creates new costs, that is considered a local mandate under the Maine Constitution. In this case, the bill mandates that counties maintain their records in a new way, which would require the expenditure of a substantial amount of funds for the conversion of existing records. The state would be responsible for 90% of such costs unless this legislation is adopted with 2/3 support with a mandate preamble.

Conclusion. We appreciate the opportunity to provide testimony on this bill and express our opposition to LD 915. Thank you, and please let us know if you have questions or need additional information.

Respectfully submitted,



Stephen Gorden
Co-Chair, Legislative Policy Committee, MCCA



Jean-Marie Caterina
Co-Chair, Legislative Policy Committee, MCCA

cc: Commissioner Andre Cushing, President, MCCA
James I. Cohen, Verrill Dana, LLP, MCCA Legislative Counsel

