



# OFFICE OF CHIEF MEDICAL EXAMINER

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March 25, 2025

Senator Ingwersen & Representative Meyer  
Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services  
132<sup>nd</sup> Maine Legislature

**RE: LD562:** An Act to Update Reimbursement Rates for Transportation of Deceased Persons by Funeral Homes When the Transport is at the Request of the Chief Medical Examiner

Hello. I am Lindsey Chasteen, Office Administrator for the Maine Office of Chief Medical Examiner (OCME). I have worked at the OCME for almost 10 years and am testifying neither for nor against this bill.

The OCME is statutorily responsible (Title 22, Chap. 711) for determining the cause and manner of death of Maine’s decedents that fall under our jurisdiction. The office has been accredited by the National Association of Medical Examiners (NAME) since 2017. Part of accreditation is conducting full, forensic autopsies when there is not an obvious cause of death. Maine’s large geographical area prevents the OCME from responding to many of the death scenes, so transportation to Augusta, for autopsy, is provided by a local funeral home.

The reimbursement rates for funeral homes that transport at the request of the Office of Chief Medical Examiner are set within the OCME statute. The funding for this reimbursement comes from the OCME budget. In calendar year 2024 the OCME spent \$98,051.00 in transportation expenses to funeral homes that conducted 991 transports to and from the OCME. I have included a chart comparing the current reimbursement rates to the proposed rates, and what expenses could look like on the next page.

Please note, the OCME cannot continue to operate at the current levels without the additional funding if this bill is passed. We require a fiscal note of \$49,025.50 to adhere to the proposed change in reimbursement rates.

<u>Miles</u>	<u>Current</u>	<u>Proposed</u>	<u>Rate</u>	<u>Increase</u>
0-25	\$120	\$300	Flat	150%
26-50	\$2.00	\$4.50	Per Mile	125%
50+	\$1.75	\$4.00	Per Mile	129%

- Calendar Year 2024 Expense: \$98,051.00
- $98,051.00 \times 1.5 = 147,076.50$  (expense with minimum 150% rate increase)
- $147,076.50 - 98,051$  (current expense) = \$49,025.50

If there are any questions, please let me know. I'm happy to provide information for any work sessions.

Sincerely,



Lindsey Chasteen, MBA  
Office Administrator