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Maine Mayors Coalition Testimony on LD 557 An Act to Allow All-terrain Vehicles to Be Used on a Public Way

Senator Nangle, Representative Crafts and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Transportation, the Maine Mayors Coalition is providing testimony in opposition to LD 557, An Act to Allow All-terrain Vehicles to Be Used on a Public Way.

The Maine Mayors Coalition is a nonpartisan group representing the mayors of eleven Maine communities – Auburn, Bangor, Biddeford, Lewiston, Portland, Rockland, Saco, Sanford, South Portland, Waterville and Westbrook – and nearly 300,000 residents. The Coalition advocates on behalf of our citizens and municipalities for policies that recognize the vital services Maine cities provide and the positive impact Maine cities have on our state. The Coalition seeks to work in partnership with state and federal elected officials to meet the needs of Maine people.

Our Coalition is very concerned about the safety and enforcement issues that would arise should LD 557 pass.

Our understanding is that this section of the law considers a public way to be any state, county or municipal way “over which the general public has a right to pass.” In addition to our cities’ many streets and roads with speed limits under 50 miles per hour, our public ways encompass miles and miles of sidewalks and recreational paths now limited to pedestrian use. Since these appear to fall under the definition of public ways, all-terrain vehicles would be allowed to ride on them, presenting the potential for very serious safety issues for both pedestrians and drivers.

Ensuring ATVs are properly licensed and drivers are adhering to appropriate traffic laws and safe driving protocols on public ways would be additional responsibilities required of our law enforcement officers. Our officers also would be tasked with responding to and reporting any accidents on public ways, regardless of which government entity owns the public way. The added work would come at a time when our police departments are already stretched thin and struggling to fill vacancies.

For these reasons, we urge you to vote ought not to pass on LD 557.

Thank you for your time and attention to our concerns.