



TESTIMONY of Megan Diver
Vice President
Maine Energy Marketers Association

**BEFORE THE JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON
HOUSING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
In Opposition of LD 1159**

An Act to Prohibit Businesses from Refusing to Accept Cash for In-person Payments

Senator Curry, Representative Gere, and members of the Housing and Economic Development Committee, my name is Megan Diver, I am the Vice President of the Maine Energy Marketers Association (MEMA).

MEMA is a trade association composed of approximately 300-member companies and more than 5,000 direct and 5,000 jobs in the energy delivery and servicing businesses MEMA also represents more than 300 members who own and operate 70% of Maine's 1,300 convenience stores. I am here today to voice our Association's opposition to the tobacco tax increase proposed in LD 1159.

For years, our members have been integral contributors to the economic well-being of the state of Maine and its communities where they operate. They provide a wide array of products and services that strive to maintain everyday conveniences for consumers, employ hard-working members of the communities, and participate in charitable activities in their towns.

During the Covid-19 pandemic these stores remained open and were deemed "essential services." During this time stores were encouraged to reduce contact as much as possible. In response to the pandemic, the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention released guidance encouraging retailers to use touchless payment options. Our members complied with these guidelines. Some have continued to operate under these guidelines, while many have returned to accepting cash. However, we are opposed to mandating that every business must accept cash, while at the same time we would be opposed to mandate every business to accept credit and debit cards. The payment method accepted should be a decision of the business owner.

I respectfully ask you to vote in opposition to LD 1159 just as the 130th Maine Legislature did and the 131st Maine Legislature did.

Thank you.