

Michael Guay  
Alfred  
LD 667

Members of the Transportation Committee,

My name is Michael Guay, and I am a proud third-generation shop owner. I operate two licensed inspection stations and one full-service shop in Southern Maine, as well as one inspection station in New Hampshire. I am here today to support bill LD 667. I speak to you as not only a shop owner, but as a parent concerned for the safety of Maines roads.

The importance of vehicle inspections is non-negotiable. I witness the importance of this program daily. On average, my shops conduct approximately 17,000 inspections within a calendar year. The average fail rate is roughly 30% and within that number of failed inspections, 25% of vehicles fail for significant safety reasons. Within your handout, I have provided examples collected over just the last two weeks...as shown these vehicles have rotting subframes, bald tires, and rusted brake lines, among other concerns. These safety failures cannot be addressed if a car is not inspected by a certified technician while on a lift. Please take note that these are the unsafe vehicles that our families are sharing the roads with. This program provides the consumer with the opportunity to perform preventative maintenance on their vehicle, budget for future costly repairs, and prevents substantial operational failure, failure that is inevitable if the customer is not aware of their vehicle's overall health, just like your annual doctor's visit.

This vehicle inspection fee structure update is long overdue, considering the last fee update was over 24 years ago, despite a significant increase in inflation and overhead costs. LD 667 provides auto shop owners with the opportunity to be fairly compensated for the responsibility and liability they assume by providing vehicle inspections. When done properly, a comprehensive inspection takes an average of 25 minutes. Currently, shop labor rates range anywhere from \$80-\$140 per hour so inspections should cost a minimum of \$25-\$35. With the current rates that are in place, shops are losing money and valuable time. The proposed pricing scale within LD 667 will allow Maine's inspection stations to remain operational and keep qualified technicians in the field.

I am confident that this electronic system will provide a significant improvement to the overall inspection program. Based on my experience with the electronic program in New Hampshire. This system would help:

- Ensure consistency in inspection practices by providing a template of safety requirements that must be looked at within the inspection process.
- The state will save valuable time and administrative resources by expediting sticker submission, tracking, and updating sticker inventory.
- All issued stickers are logged into the electronic system and readily accessible, should an issue arise, holding inspection stations accountable.

Misinformation has recently circulated about bill LD 667. The purpose of the electronic system is to ensure honesty and accountability amongst technicians who perform the inspections, not for the state to track consumers. Not only does LD 667 streamline the inspection process from an administrative standpoint for the state, but it also maintains the integrity of the inspection program. Therefore, ensuring the safety of all Maine roads and our families who travel them daily. The critical need for vehicle safety inspections cannot be overlooked or undermined.

Thank you for the time. I ask the committee to support LD 667 and this system and fee update.