



60 Community Drive | Augusta, ME 04330-9486  
1-800-452-8786 (in state) | (t) 207-623-8428  
(f) 207-624-0129

## Testimony of the Maine Municipal Association

### In Opposition to LD 1105, *An Act Concerning Displaced Civilian Federal Firefighters in Maine*

April 16, 2025

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Senator Tipping, Representative Roeder and members of the Labor Committee, my name is Kate Dufour, and I am submitting written testimony in opposition to LD 1105 on behalf of the municipal officials who serve on the Association's Legislative Policy Committee.

Although members of the policy committee appreciate the intent to help fill vacancies in municipal firefighter departments, mandating that fire chiefs give priority consideration to displaced civilian federal fighters is of concern, leading municipal leaders to question the need to upset the apple cart.

While policy committee members recognize that the bill does not require a fire chief to offer a job to a displaced firefighter who does not meet all local requirements, it does elevate those candidates above all others and ignores equally important attributes. From a municipal perspective, the "good standing" provision under section 2 of the bill could have unintended consequences by putting a damper on department morale, derailing succession planning efforts and devaluing the importance of an individual's understanding of the community being served. It could become a public relations nightmare if fire chiefs are required to hire a civilian federal firefighter, despite another firefighter's seniority, career advancement plans, or years of volunteer service.

Additionally, civilian federal firefighters who meet the local standards will already be desired candidates for vacancies; however, the bill broadens this language to include all "open" positions which could be read to include internal department vacancies. A civilian federal firefighter who has served a community on a part-time basis would automatically be elevated for preference of an open supervisor position, instead of a vacancy created and available to all members of the department.

Municipalities already have the tools necessary to hire firefighters who have the right mix of skills, training and community support. Rather than requiring fire chiefs to give priority standing to a category of public service employees, perhaps the database suggested in the bill could be used by fire chiefs as a centralized recruitment tool.

Thank you for your time and consideration.