

# Letter of Testimony in Support of LD507: An Act to Authorize a General Fund Bond Issue to Fund LifeFlight of Maine

April 14, 2025

Dear Appropriations and Financial Affairs Committee,

I am writing to express my strong support for LD507: An Act to Authorize a General Fund Bond Issue to Fund LifeFlight of Maine. From its bases in Sanford, Lewiston, and Bangor, LifeFlight operates helicopters, fixed-wing airplanes, and specialized ground ambulances, serving over 2,500 patients annually, which equates to approximately seven patients per day in every corner of the state.

Since its inception in 1998, LifeFlight has been a vital lifeline for the state's residents. As past Chief Operating Officer of a rural hospital in Northern Maine, I have seen first-hand how LifeFlight of Maine is instrumental in addressing the emergent healthcare needs of individuals residing throughout rural Maine, a region marked by geographical diversity and challenging secondary roads that become perilous during the long winter season. The organization's fleet of helicopters, fixed-wing airplanes, and specialized ground ambulances ensure timely and efficient medical transportation, often reaching remote locations that are otherwise inaccessible due to poor road conditions, remote locations, and hazardous weather. Living and vacationing in remote Maine often means long-distance transport to reach community hospital emergency departments, delaying life-sustaining intervention and treatment. LifeFlight's access to helipads and heliports allows critical emergency access, enabling rapid movement of these patients from community hospitals to tertiary care centers in Maine and beyond. This capability is essential for enhancing survivability, especially in a state where geographical and meteorological challenges can significantly impede timely medical intervention. By surmounting these obstacles, LifeFlight provides crucial critical care support, enabling patients to receive essential medical interventions promptly, regardless of Maine's demanding geography and environment.

Within community hospitals, the physicians, advanced practice providers, nurses, and administrative staff view LifeFlight as a critical component to the overall healthcare system. These individuals call on LifeFlight when managing critical patients and know that LifeFlight will come. The importance of LifeFlight can be seen when examining the impact LifeFlight has on the healthcare system in Maine. LifeFlight's aircraft fly over twice the average number of patients and operating hours per annum compared other similar regional and national providers. The organization provides comprehensive critical care support for Maine's emergency care system, ranging from interhospital transport for premature newborns, managing complex trauma patients and those requiring full cardio-pulmonary intervention. In addition to interhospital transport, LifeFlight also provides direct emergency response, supporting ground first-responder EMS services.

LifeFlight of Maine has always prioritized safety, committing to a systems approach to build a "safety envelope" environment around patients and employees, ensuring the highest level of operational safety and reliability possible. Through this bond, LifeFlight will be positioned to assist hospitals in rebuilding helipads and establishing fuel depots, both of which will decrease flight turnaround time and increase access to critical transfers to tertiary care centers. This bond will further improve access through enhancing communication systems and weather observing systems, allowing for improved response and planning around Maine's challenging winters. This dedication to safety and excellence further underscores the importance of supporting LD507.

In conclusion, LifeFlight of Maine is an indispensable asset to the state's healthcare system. The passage of LD507 will ensure that LifeFlight can continue to provide essential services to the residents of Maine,

overcoming the unique rural geographical challenges it faces. I urge you to support this Act and secure the funding needed for LifeFlight to continue its life-saving work.

Sincerely,

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