



CITY OF BANGOR

Judiciary Committee

Testimony in Opposition to LD 1347 – An Act to Increase the Cap on Liability for Governmental Entities Under the Maine Tort Claims Act

April 10, 2025

Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn and Honorable Members of the Judiciary Committee, my name is Debbie Laurie and I am the City Manager for the City of Bangor. I am writing in opposition to LD 1347, An Act to Increase the Cap on Liability for Governmental Entities Under the Maine Tort Claims Act.

LD 1347 would increase the statutory cap on damages recoverable against governmental entities under the Maine Tort Claims Act from \$400,000 to \$1.2 million. While it's important to recognize the importance of providing adequate remedies for those harmed by governmental negligence, this bill presents a substantial financial and operational burden for municipal governments and, by extension, taxpayers.

LD 1347 would triple the liability cap under the Maine Tort Claims Act. A threefold increase in exposure would require local governments to reevaluate and significantly increase their insurance coverage to guard against the possibility of higher damage awards. The unintended effects of this proposed increase on municipal budgets and operations are of great concern, especially when there has not been a preponderance of cases where the need has been demonstrated for such an increase.

Such an increase would translate directly into increased costs which would either divert resources from core municipal services or result in an increase to the property taxes.

For these reasons, we urge the Committee to vote Ought Not to Pass on LD 1347. It's important to remain open to dialogue about appropriate safeguards for citizens and thoughtful updates to the law, but this bill does not strike the right balance between public accountability and fiscal responsibility. Thank you for your consideration, and please do not hesitate to reach out with any questions.

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