



Town of Brunswick, Maine

INCORPORATED 1739

TOWN COUNCIL

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April 25, 2025

Senator Pinny Beebe-Center
Representative Tavis Hasenfus
Members of the Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee

Dear Senator Beebe-Center, Representative Hasenfus, and Members of the Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee,

On behalf of the Brunswick Town Council, I am writing to express very strong support for the passage of LD1600 - An Act to Provide Regional Support Funding for Municipal Police Departments to Support Special Response Teams.

Brunswick's Police Department is comprised of professionals we are genuinely proud of and whom we deeply respect. They uphold the values of our community through their daily work and interactions with those they serve, sometimes putting themselves at risk to do so. Our Police Department is available, upon request, to serve those in other communities as required by mutual aid agreements under state law. They do so with the same level of professionalism and commitment, recognizing no municipal boundary when it comes to responding to a call for aid.

Since 1985, the Brunswick Police Department has had a Special Response Teams (SRT), one of only six (6) certified by the Maine Criminal Justice Academy. This requires that officers receive extra specialized training to maintain Tactical Team Certification, preparing them for the most dangerous situations. It also requires special equipment.

The Brunswick SRT, by its definition, is prepared to react rapidly no matter where the call comes from, upon vetted request. It provides tactical resources regionally in the Mid-Coast area but has been deployed as far as Norridgewock. It was called into service at the Lewiston mass shooting incident, and other critical situations requiring special training and equipment.

Maintaining an SRT comes at significant expense to the Town, paid entirely by Brunswick taxpayers. It is conservatively estimated that the extra expense of maintaining Brunswick's SRT exceeds \$42,000/year, not including any administrative or adjunct responsibilities. For example, in 2024, the Town Council voted to replace its 1979 Special Rescue Vehicle (SRV) at a cost of \$380,000. The older vehicle needs to be replaced because it has become entirely unreliable. Numerous Mid-Coast police departments sent official letters supporting and urging Brunswick's purchase of the SRV, citing its critical regional need. None of them offered financial support.

Training, equipping, maintaining, and funding a certified SRT ready to respond rapidly to a critical incident outside of the municipality goes above and beyond what was intended in mutual aid agreement legislation. The cost should not fall solely on individual municipalities.

LD1600 would recognize the critical statewide need SRT's provide. It would spread the burden of maintaining these teams in a very simple, logical manner. It would also ensure the resource is trained, prepared, and equipped to respond to the worst situations.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sande Updegraph". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Sande Updegraph
Chair, Brunswick Town Council