

Cynthia Cushing
Readfield
LD 1738

Testimony in Support of LD 1738: An Act to Establish the Biohazard Waste Disposal Grant Program to Support Public Health Efforts in the State.

To the Honorable members of the Health and Human Services Committee,
My name is Cynthia Cushing, and I am providing this written testimony in support of LD 1738, a bill that will enhance public safety across Maine by directly addressing the issue of improperly discarded syringes in our shared public spaces. The health and well-being of all community members in Maine, including those experiencing substance use and homelessness, are interconnected. LD 1738 offers a practical and evidence-based approach to improve safety for everyone.

The presence of improperly discarded syringes in parks, streets, restrooms, and other public areas poses a significant risk of accidental needle-stick injuries to children, families, municipal workers, and the general public. This bill directly tackles this concern by providing dedicated funding for syringe disposal initiatives. This bill recognizes the unique needs of Maine's diverse communities, from our rural towns to our urban centers like Portland. By empowering local governments, Syringe Service Programs (SSPs), and community-based organizations to direct resources where they are most needed, LD 1738 ensures that disposal solutions are tailored to the specific contexts and populations they serve. These local entities possess the on-the-ground expertise to effectively implement safe disposal options.

LD 1738 strikes a crucial balance between ensuring access to evidence-based healthcare services, including sterile syringes that prevent disease transmission, and prioritizing public safety. By focusing on safe disposal, this bill aims to reduce improperly discarded syringes without limiting access to life-saving harm reduction services that keep individuals and the broader community healthier.

LD 1738 represents a sensible and necessary step towards enhancing public safety in Maine. By funding evidence-based syringe disposal initiatives, empowering local communities, and recognizing the critical link between harm reduction and the housing crisis, this bill will create safer and healthier environments for all residents. I urge the Committee to support LD 1738 and move it forward for the benefit of our entire state.

Thank you, and Genuinely,
Cynthia Cushing, Readfield, Maine