



Testimony of the Maine Municipal Association

Neither For Nor Against

LD 1814 - An Act to Increase Transparency in State Government by Amending Laws Regarding Persons Attempting to Influence the Competitive Bidding Process and Lobbyist Reporting During Rule-making Processes

April 30, 2025

Senator Hickman, Representative Supica and members of the Veterans and Legal Affairs Committee, my name is Rebecca Lambert, and I am providing testimony neither for nor against LD 1814 on behalf of the Maine Municipal Association's (MMA) elected 70-member Legislative Policy Committee (LPC). For reference, MMA is a nonpartisan, nonprofit member service organization and aims to help provide policy solutions that work for all residents in Maine and the LPC guides MMA's advocacy efforts and establishes positions on bills of municipal interest.

Municipal governments operate on the front lines of public service by managing emergency response, delivering clean water, maintaining infrastructure, and supporting economic development, all while navigating state and federal regulations that have a direct and immediate impact on our residents. Municipal voices are grounded in real-world experience and practical application and are essential partners to crafting effective, efficient rules that work in practice, not just on paper.

As written, LD 1814 would change the definition of lobbying in a way that would require municipal officials to register as lobbyists merely for participating in the rulemaking process. This imposes an unnecessary and burdensome barrier to good governance as local governments are not seeking to influence policy for private gain. These local leaders are fulfilling a duty to advocate for the public interest, and, in our view, this participation is not a lobbying activity in the conventional sense, but more of a civic duty.

Furthermore, forcing municipal representatives into the lobbying framework may discourage smaller or under-resourced communities from engaging in the process altogether. This would potentially create an uneven playing field, where only those with resources to navigate registration requirements can be heard. It silences the very voices that can bring the most insight to the table—those who implement policies on the ground.

For municipal officials, the goal is collaboration and respectfully urge this body to recognize the value of municipal input and to affirm that local governments should be able to engage in rulemaking processes through testimony, comment, or conversation, without the stigma or procedural burden of registering as a lobbyist. By doing this, we ensure that the rulemaking process remains inclusive, transparent, and informed by those who are tasked with making policy work for the people.

Thank you for your time and considering the municipal perspective.

