

Testimony for the Record  
submitted to the  
Joint Standing Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry

Public Hearing: Tuesday, May 6, 2025 1:00 PM, **Cross Building, Room 214**

My name is Patrick O'Brien from Norway, Maine. Thank you Senator Rachel Talbot Ross, Senate Chair and Representative William D. Pluecker, House Chair for inviting the opportunity to provide testimony on L.D. 1771, *An Act to Strengthen Oversight of Kennels by Changing the Licensing Authority from Municipalities to the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry*.

I am neither for nor against LD 1771, rather I emphasize that common sense, neighborly consideration and being a civilized society requires enforcement of laws that protect all citizens who wish to enjoy their property without intrusion or harm by others. Traditionally, neighborhoods held greater prominence for maintaining subtle moral or cultural values. But things are changing, particularly when one's individual space is of no relevance to others around them. For example, it appears much less of a concern, if you personally cannot hear 10+ dogs howling at once for hours at a time for years.

Well, one might say, "there ought to be a law". Laws are, by their nature, rules set forth by a governing body to regulate behavior, ensure societal order and promote justice. The essential characteristic of a law is its enforceability. Based on my experience that I have shared with all the members of the Committee and given my experience with Title 7, *3950-A Official Refusal or Neglect of Duty by a Municipal Officer Complaint*, LD 1771 is about transferring responsibility for an unenforced set of laws that, while valid and formally part of our legal system, are not actively implemented or upheld by the local relevant authorities,... or, for that matter, by the State Animal Welfare Program. These laws exist in a state of dormancy, due to various reasons, such as changing societal norms, leadership, role clarity, resource constraints, training, supervision, political loyalties, whim or will and lots of finger pointing.

In essence, the question is; would shuffling of the organizational deck make a difference in light of the basic common sense need for consideration of another neighbor's right to quiet enjoyment of their property without harming others? Maybe such logic is not so common.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony. I urge the Committee to examine the source of the problem. I suggest a better method of accountability which consequence or penalty is assessed directly to the public official that refuses or neglects to enforce the laws already passed. That's where the responsibility lies and a good starting point that citizens might expect would happen.