



## CITY OF BANGOR

### **Joint Standing Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety**

#### **Testimony on LD 852 – “An Act to Reduce the Property Tax Burden by Adequately Funding County Jail Operations”**

April 30, 2025

Senator Beebe-Center, Carney, Representative Hasenfus and Honorable Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety, I am Debbie Laurie, City Manager for the City of Bangor. On behalf of the Bangor City Council I am providing testimony on LD 852 “An Act to Reduce the Property Tax Burden by Adequately Funding County Jail Operations”.

As all levels of government look to provide high-quality services expected by our constituents or in the case of county jails, mandated by the State, balancing the increasing costs of services with the limited financial ability of taxpayers to continue to absorb these increases costs has reached the breaking point.

We recognize the importance of ensuring all jails are held to the same standards to ensure all our State’s statutory requirements are upheld. We echo the concerns of many in that our county jails are being significantly impacted by forces outside of their control such as; delays in court date scheduling or assignment of representation, lack of access to address immediate mental health or substance use disorder needs, etc.

The budgetary challenges faced by all levels of government have many similarities. The State’s revenue streams are broad, at the municipal level our primary revenue stream is limited to property taxes, and the county revenue stream defaults to placing an additional burden on the municipal property taxpayer.

The City of Bangor supports an increase in state funding of county jail operations to reduce the property tax burden of our constituents. Our county tax bill for the upcoming fiscal year is \$5,171,826, of that amount our property taxpayers share of county jail funding is \$1,770,376. If 90% of the funding for county and regional jails was provided by the State, we would not be required to raise \$1,593,338 in property taxes, which equates to an estimated \$100 saving to our average homeowner.

We would respectfully request the Committee consider increasing state funding of county and regional jails thereby reducing the property tax burden. Thank you for your consideration, and please do not hesitate to reach out with questions.

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