



May 6, 2025

**Melissa Andrews, Peace Ridge Sanctuary, Testimony in Support of L.D. 1771**

Senator Talbot Ross, Representative Pluecker, and Members of the ACF Committee:

My name is Melissa Andrews, I am a resident of Palermo, and I co-manage Peace Ridge Sanctuary, a nonprofit operating animal shelters in Belfast, Brooks, and Freedom. I am testifying in strong support of 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.

While most kennels in Maine are currently licensed through the state, there is a smaller segment of kennels that don't fall under these rules and instead are licensed through municipalities. Smaller, rural towns do not always have the resources to properly track, inspect, and enforce animal welfare laws in these municipal kennels. Some of these towns do not even have dedicated animal control officers working for them, meaning animals at these kennels can slip through the cracks and don't have the protections our laws are designed to provide.

As a shelter receiving calls from residents throughout the state about animals in need on a daily basis, we have heard more horror stories over the years than we can count about dogs suffering in municipal hunting dog and sled dog kennels from obvious violations of state anti-cruelty laws. Just this week, someone reached out to us about 10 hunting dogs who died from lack of care in municipal kennel. It is unbelievably upsetting to talk with residents who have shared formal complaints with animal control, only to have no actions taken. Typically, when animal control will not intervene (for whatever reasons), that is when we'd advocate for making a formal complaint to the state animal welfare program, but currently, this is not an option for municipal shelters. We've also heard from frustrated state agents who receive these calls but cannot intervene. Things need to change.

By shifting municipally licensed kennels to instead fall under the state's existing kennel licensing system, L.D. 1771 would enable better records keeping, general oversight, and enforcement of animal welfare laws. Having uniformity in licensing and inspections for all types of kennels and ensuring these facilities can be inspected by the state, not just towns, provides an additional safeguard for the animals. Having all kennel licenses managed at a state level will remove some of the financial and oversight burden from the towns and allow for state support on animal welfare issues when needed.

Please vote to move this commonsense bill forward.

Thank you, Melissa Andrews, Palermo

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Palermo  
LD 1771

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Thank you,  
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