

Maine Fire Service Institute

Website: mfsi.me.edu

P: 207-844-2070

F: 207-844-2082

Email: mfsiinfo@mainecollege.edu



May 6, 2025

Testimony of James A. Graves, Director, Maine Fire Service Institute

In Support of LD 1659 – “An Act to Raise Revenue to Fund Firefighting Equipment Purchases and Training Related to Electric Vehicle Fires Through a Fee on Electric Vehicles”

Before the Joint Standing Committee on Transportation Senator Nangle, Representative Crafts, and Distinguished Members of the Committee:

My name is James A. Graves, and I serve as the Director of the Maine Fire Service Institute. I am submitting this testimony on behalf of Maine’s firefighters, my students, and our communities. As an employee of Southern Maine Community College, I should note that my testimony is tied to my role and does not imply support of LD 1659 from the Maine Community College System. MCCS is not taking a position on this bill.

As the State Fire Training Director, I see firsthand how Maine’s firefighters are being left behind in preparing for incidents involving rapidly emerging technologies. From electric vehicles and energy storage systems to rooftop solar installations, our fire service is facing threats that traditional entry level training does not cover.

At present, there are no comprehensive National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) training curricula addressing these new hazards. While the NFPA did release an online course for electric vehicle fire response last year—made accessible to Maine firefighters through a grant—participation has been limited and the reach has fallen short of our statewide needs. Online training alone cannot replace the hands-on, scenario-based instruction required to prepare our responders for high-risk, complex emergencies. This training requires resources.

LD 1659 offers a forward-looking solution by establishing a dedicated funding mechanism to support training and equipment for these specific challenges. Should this bill become law, the Maine Fire Service Institute is ready and willing to deliver practical, regional training programs across the state to ensure our firefighters are prepared and protected.

As a former career firefighter, I can tell you one of the worst feelings is hearing the alarm sound and not knowing exactly what you're about to face—or how to handle it. Training eliminates that fear. It replaces uncertainty with confidence and safety. That is what this legislation will help us provide.

I respectfully urge you to support LD 1659 so that, in turn, the Maine Fire Service Institute can support our fire service with the right training, at the right time, for the right challenges.

Thank you for your time and your dedication to Maine’s public safety.

With respect,

James A. Graves

Director, Maine Fire Service Institute

**Maine Fire Service
Institute**

Website: mfsi.me.edu

P: 207-844-2070

F: 207-844-2082

Email: mfsiinfo@mcme.edu

