



Testimony of the Maine Municipal Association

In Opposition To

LD 1742 – An Act to Prohibit a State Social Media Platform Account from Restricting User Comments
May 5, 2025

Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn and members of the Judiciary Committee, my name is Rebecca Lambert, and I am providing testimony in opposition to LD 1742 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.

For public servants, one of their primary duties is to provide timely, accurate information and essential services to Maine communities. In recent years, social media has become an indispensable communication tool that unintentionally also evolved into a platform where misinformation, harassment, and abuse can quickly overwhelm the intended purpose of these timely communication channels. From the municipal perspective, prohibiting public comments on agency posts is not about avoiding dialogue, but about protecting the integrity of government communications and ensuring more effective public engagement.

The LPC would offer the following points for consideration.

Preventing the Spread of Misinformation. Social media platforms are a fertile ground for the rapid spread of false or misleading information, often buried in the comment threads. These narratives can quickly distort public understanding and erode trust in municipalities work, when these narratives are unfounded. Prohibiting comments helps a community maintain a consistent and factual message without opening the door to confusion or fearmongering.

Protecting Public Employees and Residents from Harassment. Municipal social media pages have increasingly become targets of toxic behavior, from personal attacks on municipal staff to discriminatory or threatening remarks aimed at other residents. Local governments should not be forced to play host to harmful speech simply because a post is public. A blanket comment ban would help preserve civility and protect the mental well-being of both staff and community members.

Improving Operational Efficiency. Moderating comments requires extensive staff time and resources that many municipalities, particularly smaller ones, do not have. It is an unsustainable burden to expect municipalities to police comments while still delivering core services. Prohibiting comments will allow staff to focus on high-quality, proactive communication and service delivery.

Preserving Alternative Feedback Channels. Residents still have ample opportunity to engage with their local government through public meetings, phone calls, emails, service apps, and online feedback forms, all of which remain accessible. Restricting comments on social media should not equate to cutting off the public but will shift the conversation to a more productive and manageable format.





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Local leaders recognize the value of public input and are committed to providing essential services in a transparent and accessible manner. However, the realities of modern participation demand a more disciplined approach, and municipal officials believe prohibiting comments is a reasonable and resource-conscious step to ensure that our communication tools remain informative, safe, and mission-focused.



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