



STATE OF MAINE
Department of Public Safety
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May 6, 2025

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

Senator Nangle, Representative Crafts, and Distinguished Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Transportation, my name is Shawn Esler, and it is a privilege to serve as the State Fire Marshal. I write **neither for nor against** LD 1659.

Maine's Fire Service has not been able to keep up with the training requirements necessary to safely combat fires involving electric vehicles, solar panels, and energy storage systems. This technology has been deployed across the State and has been well supported by the administration as Maine embraces green initiatives.

We must remember a large portion of Maine's Fire Service consists of volunteers on shoestring budgets. A fire blanket to suppress electric vehicle fire costs approximately \$3,000. Some are considered a one-time use. For discussion, some Fire Department's entire training budget is less than the cost of one blanket.

LD 1659 is written so that the funds are passed through the Fire Commission. It is important to note that the only two full-time employees assigned to the Fire Commission are the State Fire Marshal and the Director of Maine Fire Service Institute (MFSI). Annually the Fire Commission, issues grants, creates reports, examines data, and oversees funding. If LD 1659 is to pass as suggested, I would ask those funds support one Office Associate II position in the Fire Marshal's Office. I would dedicate that staff member to support the Fire Commission and MFSI in the management of Electric Vehicle Firefighting Fund and to support their many other initiatives.

Thank you for your consideration on this matter.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Shawn Esler".

Shawn Esler, State Fire Marshal