



STATE OF MAINE
Department of Public Safety
Office of State Fire Marshal
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May 7, 2025

LD 1830, Resolve, to Establish a Pilot Program to Protect Firefighters from Cancer

Senator Bailey, Representative Mathieson, and distinguished members of the Health Coverage, Insurance, and Financial Services Committee, my name is Shawn Esler, and it is a privilege to serve as the State Fire Marshal. I write in **opposition** of LD 1830.

We are in opposition only because this resolve duplicates an effort currently underway. Recently, the Department of Public Safety released the **Public Safety Health and Wellness Reimbursement Fund** (Request for Application) to reimburse government entities the cost of providing cancer, cardiovascular, and mental health screenings. Not only does our program include firefighters, but law enforcement officers, corrections, dispatchers, and EMS providers.

The Public Safety Health and Wellness Reimbursement Fund was modeled after a successful pilot program in Southern Maine that recently completed a screening, where in one example, they found a cancerous tumor. That firefighter was able to receive early medical treatment. Another screening found a massive heart block and that firefighter later received open heart surgery, likely mitigating a tragedy.

The one-time funding of \$2,000,000 aims to provide all 16 counties across Maine with supplemental funding to jumpstart first responder wellness and yield results like the examples above. I encourage the Committee to learn more about this program by visiting the website of the Office of State Procurement Services. We are currently in the process of evaluating the applications and we intend to announce awards prior to July 1, 2025.

In July 2026, the Office of State Fire Marshal (FMO) will be able to create a report describing the effectiveness of the reimbursement fund. We believe through the statewide data captured over the next year; we will simultaneously accomplish the goal of LD 1830.

If additional funding is considered on an ongoing basis, the need to consider a single FMO position (Office Associate II) will be necessary. The FMO has worked to deliver this program almost entirely after hours because we simply do not have the manpower to both oversee these important programs and manage existing services.

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

Shawn Esler, State Fire Marshal