

OFFICE OF  
**LINCOLN COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**

32 HIGH STREET • P.O. BOX 249  
WISCASSET, MAINE 04578

INCORPORATED 1760

COMMISSIONERS OFFICE (207) 882-6311  
FAX (207) 882-4320

WWW.LINCOLNCOUNTYMAINE.ME



DISTRICT ONE  
Evan C. Goodkowsky  
Wiscasset, MAINE

DISTRICT TWO  
WILLIAM B. BLODGETT  
WALDOBORO, MAINE

DISTRICT THREE  
David Levesque  
Newcastle, MAINE

May 12, 2025

Sen. Beebe-Center, Chair  
Rep. Hasenfus, Chair  
Joint Standing Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety  
100 State House Station  
Augusta, ME 04333

Re: ***Testimony of Lincoln County Commissioners regarding LD 1950, An Act to Authorize the Inclusion of Additional Counties in the Lincoln and Sagadahoc Multicounty Jail Authority***

Chair Beebe-Center, Chair Hasenfus, and Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety:

On behalf of the Lincoln County Board of Commissioners, I appreciate the opportunity to provide testimony to this Committee ***in opposition to*** LD 1950. Lincoln County opposes LD 1950 because it makes changes to the governing legislation of the Lincoln and Sagadahoc Multicounty Jail Authority that has not been requested or reviewed by Lincoln County, Sagadahoc County, or the Multicounty Jail Authority.

**What does LD 1950 do?** LD 1950 permits the Multicounty Jail Authority to add additional counties to the Jail Authority. It allows a non-member county to hold a public hearing on the matter, followed by the Commissioners of an applying county to hold an organizational meeting and vote on whether to apply to join the Jail Authority. This application is then submitted to the existing Jail Authority to consider and hold a vote on whether to accept the county into the Jail Authority.

**Discussion.** This bill proposes allowing non-member counties to become members of the Lincoln and Sagadahoc Multicounty Jail Authority through a public hearing, organizational meeting, and then application to the current Jail Authority. This process excludes the Lincoln County and Sagadahoc County Boards of Commissioners from the decision process, except for their singular vote on the existing Jail Authority.

The Commissioners from each County are elected by constituents who have been fiscally responsible for paying the bond debt of \$24.6M to the Multicounty Jail Authority for two decades. These constituents have also paid a premium for operational costs, totaling \$5M annually. This valuable asset of the taxpayers of Lincoln and Sagadahoc Counties is safeguarded by each Board, as well as by the Jail Authority membership.

LD 1950 does not address the value of the asset being subdivided to another county. Nor does it direct how the owners of the asset (Lincoln and Sagadahoc County taxpayers) will be reimbursed for their investment in this asset. Additionally, it is lacking in defining an equitable operational cost division for future years.

Another concern is that the Jail Authority is made up of individuals who are appointed by the County Commissioners, but half of the members are not elected officials. The decision to allow additional counties to

join the Multicounty Jail Authority should be representative of the will of the people who have historically funded the costs. That mechanism exists through the elected Boards of Commissioners, not through a mixed-member Jail Authority. Allowing this Jail Authority to have the oversight to share the ownership of county assets is an overreach of their roles.

### **Collaboration Efforts**

Recent efforts have been made in Maine Prosecutorial District Six to collaborate with the intent of reducing the cost of providing corrections and to increase efficiencies as it relates to the coordination of housing incarcerated individuals. Just as the formation of the original Multicounty Jail Authority takes time to complete, so too does this collaboration.

Both Lincoln and Sagadahoc Counties have been willing members in the District Six Collaborative working group and we continue to work towards ways we can partner with others to strengthen the County Jail System as a whole. All of the members of the working group have committed funds towards engaging a consultant to offer recommendations to strengthen the Collaborative and ways we can extend our reach to work together more efficiently to achieve our goals. Those recommendations are expected to be delivered in the next few months. Until each of the elected Board of Commissioners can consider their options, taking steps like those proposed in LD 1950 are premature.

Each County must take action to safeguard the interests of their citizens, and the investment in the Multicounty Jail Authority is no exception. The Board of Commissioners of Lincoln County stands ready to make the necessary evaluations and take action steps towards progress, once the time is right. They also need to be participants in that decision, and not have it thrust upon them without their consent. Until then, no change in legislation is necessary for progress to continue.

As a final note, the Maine County Jails are woefully underfunded and counties are taking every step within their power to cut costs, whether through regionalization or collaboration. This bill reflects the fact that this work continues. Although it is a slow process, Maine Counties work towards finding solutions and hope that this reinforces our commitment to being willing partners in finding efficiencies. We hope the State will recognize our efforts and concede that our intent is genuine.

**Conclusion.** We appreciate the opportunity to provide testimony in **strong opposition** to this bill. If you have questions or need additional information, please do not hesitate to let me know.

Respectfully submitted,



Carrie Kipfer  
Lincoln County Administrator

cc: Commissioner William B. Blodgett, Chair Lincoln County Commissioners  
Commissioner David Levesque, Lincoln County Commissioner  
Commissioner Evan Goodkowsky, Lincoln County Commissioner  
Hamilton W. Meserve, Two Bridges Jail Authority Chair  
Commissioner Charles Crosby, Chair Sagadahoc County Commissioners