



Testimony of the Maine Municipal Association
In Opposition To

LD 1934 - *An Act to Promote Responsible Outdoor Lighting*
May 12, 2025

Senator Baldacci, Representative Salisbury and members of the State and Local Government Committee, my name is Rebecca Lambert, and I am providing updated testimony in opposition to LD 1934 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 the advocacy efforts and establishes positions on bills of municipal interest.

While local professionals recognize the importance of responsible outdoor lighting to reduce light pollution and promote energy efficiency, municipal officials are concerned about the unfunded mandate that this legislation would place on local governments, further burdening their budgets already stretched thin.

Municipalities across the state currently plan for outdoor lighting as part of their broader capital improvement or comprehensive plans. These plans are crafted with public input, tailored to local needs, and are designed to balance fiscal responsibility with long-term community goals. Imposing a uniform state ordinance disrupts that deliberate planning process and may require local governments to divert funding from other critical infrastructure needs, such as road repairs, water systems, or emergency services, to comply with new lighting ordinance requirements.

Furthermore, there are communities who have already adopted outdoor lighting ordinances that reflect local priorities. As mentioned, these ordinances were developed through public engagement, planning board review, and local legislative processes. To impose a one-size-fits-all state mandate is not only unnecessary but risks a potential override to existing local regulations—a move that undermines the very principle of home rule authority.

Local leaders would urge the committee to consider a more collaborative path, one that supports local governments. If this bill were to move forward, our members kindly suggest model policies, technical guidance, possibly in connection with the recently created Maine Office of Community Affairs, and potential funding sources, rather than dictating compliance through an unfunded requirement.

Municipalities are not opposed to smart lighting practices but ask for flexibility and the support needed to implement those practices in ways that align with deliberate comprehensive planning efforts and budget realities.

Thank you for your time and considering the municipal perspective.

