



JANET T. MILLS
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MAINE
DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS
111 STATE HOUSE STATION
AUGUSTA MAINE
04333-0111

RANDALL A. LIBERTY
COMMISSIONER

TESTIMONY OF

SAMUEL PRAWER, DIRECTOR OF GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS MAINE DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

May 14, 2025

In Opposition to:

LD 1931, An Act to Annually Reimburse the Town of Charleston for 43 Percent of Property Tax Revenue Lost Due to the Mountain View Correctional Facility's Tax-exempt Status

Senator Grohoski, Representative Cloutier and honorable members of the Joint Standing Committee on Taxation, I am Sam Prawer, Director of Government Affairs for the Maine Department of Corrections (DOC) providing testimony today on *LD 1931, An Act to Annually Reimburse the Town of Charleston for 43 Percent of Property Tax Revenue Lost Due to the Mountain View Correctional Facility's Tax-exempt Status*.

This bill is a follow up to *LD 823, An Act to Reimburse the Town of Charleston for Expenses Related to the Mountain View Correctional Facility*, from the 131st Legislature. That bill was formerly heard and worked by the Joint Standing Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety and was unanimously voted ONTP. However, the committee also sent a letter requesting that the department convene a stakeholder group with representatives from the Town of Charleston and the Town of Dover-Foxcroft to examine ways to improve the economic viability of the Town of Charleston in light of the fact that it hosts a state correctional facility. While the department had every intention of convening that stakeholder group in good faith, those meetings have not yet occurred, leaving the town with the understandable impression that a legislative vehicle would be necessary to address its concerns. The department remains supportive of looking at opportunities for collaboration where we can help the local community, and we did not intend to leave the town or the bill sponsor with any impression to the contrary. However, when it comes to the proposal before you today, we cannot support or absorb the financial impact that would result from what it currently requires.

Since realizing our error, the department has reached out to the bill sponsor and received confirmation that the town remains interested in convening the stakeholder group requested by the previous iteration of the Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee. Because of that, we've agreed to organize the stakeholder group and convene meetings as soon as possible. Given that the group is likely to meet on a recurring basis over the next several months, we'd ask that the committee withhold from taking immediate action on this proposal and provide us all with the opportunity to work collaboratively to determine if any legislative changes are even necessary.

For these reasons, the department respectfully presents this testimony in opposition to the proposal as currently drafted, but requests that the committee allows us more time to engage in the stakeholder group that was originally requested.

This concludes my testimony. I apologize that I was not able to be in committee to present this testimony in person. Please do not hesitate to reach out if there are any questions.

Sam Prawer
Director of Government Affairs
Maine Department of Corrections