



MAINE MUNICIPAL ASSOCIATION SINCE 1936

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Testimony of the Maine Municipal Association (MMA) in Opposition to

*LD 1959, An Act to Prohibit the Department of Health and Human Services
from Reducing General Assistance Reimbursement Maximums
for Payment of Costs of Providing Emergency Shelter*

May 19, 2025

Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services, my name is Amanda Campbell, and I am submitting testimony in opposition to LD 1959 on behalf of the Maine Municipal Association's 70-member Legislative Policy Committee (LPC).

In an atmosphere of limited budget funds and making difficult decisions, municipal officials are opposed to any increases in General Assistance (GA) maximums or services without an equal increase in reimbursement. Additionally, while local leaders agree that the current GA maximums are significantly below what can be viewed as meaningful assistance, having no definition on a maximum for emergency shelter beyond "the actual cost of providing" those services, leaves communities at the mercy of those establishments, not all of which are not for profit. The property taxpayers are already responsible for 30% of GA expenses and in communities with emergency shelters, the dollar value of that 30% could significantly increase should this proposal become law.

As the social safety net and original program of last resort, GA must rely on concrete maximum levels of assistance to ensure our most vulnerable residents receive assistance with acquiring necessities, which in turn creates a foundation for self-actualization.

Despite this opposition, it is worth noting that municipal officials agree that the department should not have the authority to adopt rules classified as routine technical if those proposed rules create the financial or other serious burdens that are triggered by a major substantive rule.

Thank you for your consideration of the municipal perspective on this important topic. Please feel free to contact any member of the LPC or the MMA Advocacy team with any questions relating to municipal operations.