



Maine County Commissioners Association

4 Gabriel Drive, Suite 2 Augusta, ME 04330, 207-623-4697
www.maine counties.org

May 20, 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 MCCA regarding LD 1981, An Act to Implement the
Recommendations of the Emergency Medical Services' Board and the Blue Ribbon
Commission to Study Emergency Medical Services in the State***

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

On behalf of the Maine County Commissioners Association, we appreciate the opportunity to provide testimony to this Committee ***in support of*** LD 1981. Maine's emergency medical services (EMS) system is facing significant challenges, including budget shortfalls, workforce shortages, and areas with limited or no ambulance coverage. These issues have been well-documented and have serious implications for public safety and health. This legislation provides a comprehensive, pragmatic roadmap for addressing the deep challenges facing EMS providers across the state.

About MCCA. Briefly, the Maine County Commissioners Association was established in 1890 to assist Maine's county government in providing vital services to Maine citizens in a responsive, efficient, and credible manner. The Association is based in Augusta, represents all 16 of Maine's counties, and is governed by a board with representation from each participating county.

What does LD 1981 do? LD 1981 implements the key recommendations of both the Maine EMS Board and the Blue Ribbon Commission to Study Emergency Medical Services. These recommendations address structural issues in EMS funding, service delivery, training, and workforce retention. The bill reflects months of thoughtful deliberation by stakeholders and offers a strategic blueprint for stabilizing and strengthening Maine's EMS system.

Why this matters to counties. County governments are deeply invested in the health and safety of their communities. EMS is an essential service—and one that is increasingly strained. Counties see firsthand the impact of insufficient ambulance coverage, especially in rural areas where long response times can be a matter of life or death. We hear from sheriffs, jail administrators, dispatchers, and first responders who are struggling to fill gaps when EMS providers cannot respond. The status quo is not sustainable.

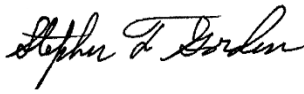
A system in distress. As noted in the Blue Ribbon Commission report, many EMS agencies are operating at or near insolvency. Recruitment and retention have reached a crisis point due to long hours, low pay,

and limited support. And in many areas of the state, residents have little or no access to reliable emergency transport. These systemic failures are not the fault of any one agency—they are the result of long-term underinvestment and fragmented oversight.

LD 1981 as a path forward. This bill does not offer a one-size-fits-all fix. Rather, it respects Maine's geographic diversity and builds flexibility into its recommendations. By improving how EMS is structured, supported, and funded, LD 1981 gives counties and local partners the tools they need to strengthen their EMS infrastructure. It is a vital step toward ensuring that every Maine resident—no matter where they live—can access timely and effective emergency medical care.

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

Respectfully submitted,



Stephen Gorden
Co-Chair, Legislative Policy Committee, MCCA



Jean-Marie Caterina
Co-Chair, Legislative Policy Committee, MCCA

cc: Commissioner Andre Cushing, President, MCCA
James I. Cohen, Verrill Dana, LLP, Legislative counsel for MCCA