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Testimony in SUPPORT of LD 1658, An Act to Preserve and Strengthen the Fund for a Healthy Maine

Health and Human Services Committee

January 7, 2026

Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer, and esteemed members of the Committee on Health and Human Services,

My name is Madeleine DesFosses, and I am submitting this testimony on behalf of the Maine Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics. The Maine AAP is a professional organization of 300 pediatricians and pediatric subspecialists dedicated to protecting the health of Maine children and adolescents. We are in strong support of LD 1658, which seeks to secure one of Maine's most vital public health resources, The Fund for a Healthy Maine.

Prevention is at the heart of pediatric medicine. Maine's pediatricians are constantly focused on how they can ensure every child in our state gets the healthy start they deserve because we know that prevention saves lives. For decades, The Fund for a Healthy Maine has provided the resources necessary for critical public health and prevention programs aimed at providing healthier futures for Maine's young people. However, action is needed to secure The Fund and ensure that future generations can benefit and thrive.

The proposal to create an ongoing transfer of a portion of the tobacco excise tax revenue from the General Fund to the Fund for a Healthy Maine is a commonsense solution when considering the public health resources necessary to prevent tobacco use and illness among youth and adults.

In the world of pediatric health, much is uncertain at the moment. Children's health and the very concept of preventive medicine is under attack, and the Maine children and families our members care for are experiencing the fallout. LD 1658 is a chance for this Legislature to send a clear message that we won't just wait to care for people until they get sick, but rather we'll invest in their health and lives right now to ensure healthy and bright futures for Maine citizens.

We urge this committee to vote 'Ought to Pass' on LD 1658 and ensure The Fund for a Healthy Maine sustains for generations to come.

Thank you.

Madeleine DesFosses
Advocacy and Public Health Manager
Maine AAP

