

Testimony of the **Maine Water Environment Association**
In Support of LD 2042 – An Act to Eliminate the Requirement for Municipalities to Provide Public Notice in a Newspaper

January 20, 2026

Senator Baldacci, Representative Salisbury, and Members of the State and Local Government Committee:

The Maine Water Environment Association (MEWEA) is a statewide professional association representing approximately 670 members involved in clean water, drinking water, and stormwater management across Maine. Our membership includes municipal and quasi-municipal utility professionals, state and local regulators, engineers, consultants, vendors, and other environmental professionals committed to protecting public health, water quality, and the environment.

MEWEA supports LD 2042, which would eliminate the statutory requirement for municipalities to publish public notices in newspapers and instead allow notice to be provided through municipal websites and other modern, widely accessible communication methods.

Public notice is a critical component of transparent and accountable governance, and MEWEA fully supports maintaining robust public access to information. However, the current statutory requirement to publish notices in newspapers imposes a growing and unnecessary financial burden on municipalities and quasi-municipal utilities, with costs ultimately borne by residents, ratepayers, and taxpayers. Newspaper publication costs continue to rise, while readership continues to decline, resulting in diminishing public benefit at increasing expense. For many communities and special districts, annual publication costs can approach or exceed several thousand dollars—funds that could otherwise be invested in infrastructure maintenance, regulatory compliance, or customer service.

Most municipalities and utility districts already provide public notice through multiple modern channels, including municipal or utility websites, electronic postings, social media, and direct outreach. These platforms are widely used by the public, are easily accessible, and allow information to be shared more quickly and at far lower cost than traditional print publication.

As drafted, LD 2042 applies to municipalities but does not explicitly include quasi-municipal entities such as sewer districts and other utility districts that are created by the Legislature, governed by publicly elected or appointed boards, and subject to public meeting and transparency requirements. MEWEA respectfully requests that the Committee consider extending the provisions of LD 2042 to include these quasi-municipal entities. Doing so would ensure consistent treatment across public entities, reduce unnecessary costs to the public, and modernize public notice requirements in a manner that reflects how Maine residents access information today.

MEWEA believes LD 2042 represents a practical, fiscally responsible update to Maine law that preserves transparency while recognizing current technology, communication practices, and the cost realities faced by local governments and public entities.

Thank you for your time and consideration, and for your continued commitment to efficient and transparent local governance.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'D. Marks', with a stylized, cursive script.

Dan Marks
Government Affairs Committee Chair
Maine Water Environment Association (MEWEA)