

Maine Broadband Coalition
Testimony in Opposition to LD 2042
January 21, 2026

Good afternoon Senator Baldacci, Representative Salisbury, and honorable members of the Joint Standing Committee on State and Local Government: my name is Joe Oliva, and I work for the Maine Broadband Coalition. I am here today to testify in opposition to LD 2042, which would eliminate the requirement for public notices in newspapers.

For several years, the Maine Broadband Coalition has been advocating for ubiquitous broadband availability, affordability, and adoption in Maine. The fact is, we are simply not there yet. This legislation, if passed, will have a huge impact on citizens throughout the state.

Even now, despite years of hard work from the Maine Connectivity Authority, the Broadband, Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) Act has yet to yield the results as promised under the former federal administration. Cancellation of Digital Equity Act funding to states has left \$35 million worth of fundable digital skills and workforce training, education, and affordability programs undone. This means many thousands of Mainers do not even have the option to pay for internet service that would be sufficient to engage in public and civic life, never mind the skill set necessary to access crucial public information.

As Maine has one of the oldest populations in the country, we have hundreds of thousands of 'non-digital natives' who struggle to navigate the internet, and have never used it as a way to keep track of local affairs. Several federal, philanthropic, and state-funded programs have spent considerable time and effort to bridge this digital divide, but there is still a long way to go before everyone has the skills they need to find and engage with information the way that many have long done through local newspapers.

We also see this digital divide play out in our local governments. [In a 2024 study](#), authors found that, in Maine, "[r]ural municipalities often face unique challenges, including limited budgets, smaller populations, and gaps in broadband infrastructure, which can hinder their ability to adopt and implement digital services effectively". These are places that need more support before they are able to engage with their constituents only over the internet. We encourage the state to find ways to support local governments, especially in rural areas, to help them catch up.

Until such time that everyone in the State has universal availability of adequate broadband connectivity, and municipalities and counties are able to maintain adequate websites, and everyone knows how to navigate and engage with the

internet, removing the requirement to print municipal public notices in newspapers is taking away the right to know for tens of thousands of Maine citizens.

On behalf of the Maine Broadband Coalition and all the Mainers who cannot access reliable broadband for whatever reason, I ask that you vote 'ought not to pass' on LD 2042.

Thank you.