



Maine County Commissioners Association

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February 10, 2026

Sen. Grohoski, Chair
Rep. Sayre, Chair
Joint Standing Committee on Taxation
100 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333

Re: ***Comments of MCCA in support of LD 2178, An Act to Establish the Independent Office of Tax Appeals and Make Other Changes to the Laws Governing the Tax Appeals Process***

Chair Grohoski, Chair Sayre, and Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Taxation:

On behalf of the Maine County Commissioners Association (MCCA), we appreciate the opportunity to provide testimony in **support** of LD 2178. MCCA supports this bill because it would improve the efficiency, consistency, and expertise applied to complex property tax appeals, while appropriately allocating those appeals to the forum best equipped to hear them. We appreciate this recommendation from Maine Revenue Services, including their due diligence in surveying Maine counties about the appeals process as part of their efforts to prepare this legislation.

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 2178 do? LD 2178 makes several changes to Maine's tax appeals process, including lowering the threshold for the Office of Tax Appeals to review non-residential property tax abatements. Under current law, non-residential appeals over \$1 million must be heard by the state, and appeals lower than that may be heard by the state or county commissioners. LD 2178 would instead require that non-residential property tax appeals involving property valued over \$500,000 bypass county review and be heard by the State Board of Property Tax Review. In doing so, the bill ensures that a greater number of complex commercial and industrial property tax appeals will be directed to the State-level body with specialized expertise in property valuation and tax appeals.

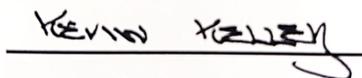
Discussion. MCCA supports the approach taken in LD 2178 because property tax appeals involving large non-residential properties frequently present complex factual and legal questions related to valuation methodology, depreciation, income capitalization, and industry-specific considerations. The State Board of Property Tax Review is structured to address these issues and is comprised of individuals selected based on their experience and expertise in property tax matters, supported by staff whose work is focused exclusively on tax appeals.

This is important to understand given current state law which provides that, when a property taxpayer wants to appeal certain property valuation assessments made by local governments in Maine, that appeal can be heard either by the State Board or by the county commissioners for the county in which the property is located. A recent case decided by the Maine Law Court¹ made clear that, despite some ambiguous language in the current law, appeals can be heard by either entity. In this regard, it is up to the property owner to choose which venue for an appeal.

Under the current law, if left unchanged, property taxpayers could continue to choose to have their appeals heard by county commissioners for their county or go to the State Board. While county commissioners possess deep local knowledge and are supported by skilled county staff, county commissions necessarily address a wide range of responsibilities beyond tax appeals. By contrast, the State Board hears appeals from across Maine and therefore develops greater familiarity with the technical and legal issues that arise in high-value commercial and industrial cases. Directing more of these larger, complex appeals to the State Board promotes consistency, efficiency, and predictability for taxpayers, municipalities, and counties alike. LD 2178 also works to reduce the administrative burden on county governments, which reduces a source of cost for local property taxpayers.

Conclusion. For these reasons, the Maine County Commissioners Association supports LD 2178. The bill represents a practical and measured adjustment to Maine's property tax appeals process that benefits taxpayers, counties, and the State by aligning complex appeals with the appropriate level of review. We appreciate the Committee's consideration and would be happy to provide additional information if helpful.

Respectfully submitted,



Kevin Kelley
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

¹ *Cassidy Holdings, LLC v. Aroostook Cnty. Commissioners*, [2023 ME 69](#), 304 A.3d 259.

