

Testimony in Partial Opposition to Part EE of LD 2212, Supplemental Budget/Tourism Marketing fund

On behalf of the Maine Campground Owners Association (MECOA), we are testifying in opposition to Part EE, which would transfer \$700,000 away from the Tourism Marketing Promotion Fund to the Municipal Investment Fund.

MECOA is the trade association that represents over 175 of Maine's licensed campgrounds. Both CampMaine and the Maine Camping Guide are products of MECOA. Our staff works tirelessly to support these campground owners by promoting camping in Maine through advocacy, education and marketing programs. It goes without saying that although we all believe Maine is the *best* camping adventure in the country, it does not happen without the hard work of promoting and marketing what Maine has to offer to the camping community. Visitors have many options in the Northeast for this type of recreation and we must compete aggressively to draw them to our State, which they spend money not only on the camping experience, but also at local restaurants and entertainment venues.

The Tourism Marketing Promotion Fund helps immensely in these efforts, and we are concerned that transferring monies from the fund to another fund will mean less dollars promoting tourism to the visitors who come to Maine.

We urge the committee to oppose Part EE and keep the Tourism Marketing Promotion Fund intact as it was originally intended.

Kathy Dyer, Executive Director