



Auburn Fire Fighter's Local 797

International Association of Fire Fighter's AFL-CIO, CLC

550 Minot Avenue, Auburn, Maine 04210

(207)-333-6633

Tyler Arsenault
President

Aaron Warner
Vice President

Erik Poland
Secretary

James Bradley
Treasurer

Riley Haines
Member at Large

Senator Rotundo, Senator Beebe-Center, Representative Gattine, Representative Hasenfus, and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs and the Joint Standing Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety:

My name is Tyler Arsenault, and I serve as President of IAFF Local 797, representing the professional firefighters of the Auburn Fire Department. I am here today in support of Sec. UU-1 within the language portion of the Governor's 2026–27 Supplemental General Fund Budget, LD 2212, as found on page 65.

I speak not only on behalf of Local 797, but also from the broader perspective of Maine's fire service professionals, the men and women who depend on accessible, high-quality training facilities to carry out their duties safely, effectively, and professionally. Under Maine law, Title 20-A §9004, Southern Maine Community College and the Maine Fire Service Institute are entrusted with fiduciary responsibility for administering these grant funds on behalf of the Maine Fire Protection Services Commission. These funds directly support regional live fire training facilities that enhance firefighter safety, operational readiness, and technical competency statewide.

The City of Auburn was awarded \$500,000.00 through this program, and a formal agreement has been signed and endorsed by the Maine Fire Commission, SMCC, and MFSI. These funds are critical to the development and sustainability of our regional training facility.

The \$1.5 million appropriated under Public Law 2023, Chapter 459, was designated for essential improvements to fire training infrastructure. These are not discretionary upgrades; they are necessary investments in preparedness, proficiency, and firefighter survivability.

From a workforce standpoint, these facilities represent far more than capital projects. They expand regional training capacity, reduce travel demands on departments, and increase access to hands-on, scenario-based instruction. Without continued funding and the carry-forward authority provided in Sec. UU-1, Auburn would lose access to the current training facility located at Auburn Central Fire Station. This would significantly impact not only our department, but also the greater Androscoggin County region. Firefighters would be required to travel to Farmington or Yarmouth to complete essential fire grounds and tactical training.

Auburn is a young and growing department. Access to a modern training facility directly strengthens skill development, operational confidence, and overall readiness. It allows firefighters to gain experience in a controlled, structured training environment before encountering real-world emergencies. That preparation translates into safer operations, stronger teamwork, and better outcomes for the citizens we serve.

Neighboring departments, both career and volunteer, regularly utilize Auburn's current training facility. Continued investment in this regional center will expand opportunities for joint training,



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improve interagency coordination, and strengthen overall readiness throughout Androscoggin County.

Without the carry-forward authority outlined in Sec. UU-1, unexpended funds would lapse at the close of FY 2025–26. That result would undermine existing agreements, delay critical infrastructure improvements, and reduce training access for firefighters across Maine. Most importantly, it would limit our members' ability to train at the level required to safely protect the public.

On behalf of IAFF Local 797 and Maine's fire service professionals, I respectfully urge the Committee to support Sec. UU-1 and authorize the carry-forward of these funds so we may honor the commitments already made and continue strengthening Maine's fire service workforce.

Thank you for your time, your leadership, and your continued commitment to public safety.

Respectfully,

Tyler. J. Arsenault, President