



### **Testimony in Support of LD 2191:**

**“An Act to Establish a Biennial Inspection System for Vehicle Rental Companies”**

Senator Nangle, Representative Crafts, and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Transportation, my name is Montana Towers, and I serve as policy analyst for Maine Policy Institute. Maine Policy is a free-market think tank, a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization that advocates for individual liberty and economic freedom in Maine. Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of LD 2191, “An Act to Establish a Biennial Inspection System for Vehicle Rental Companies.”

Maine Policy Institute has long opposed Maine’s mandatory annual vehicle inspection program. It is an outdated regulatory regime that imposes unnecessary costs on Maine drivers, small businesses, and working families with little evidence that it meaningfully improves roadway safety compared to states without such mandates.

For that reason, we view LD 2191 as a step in the right direction. Not because it helps rental car companies, but because it acknowledges the important reality that Maine’s inspection mandate deserves to be questioned. This bill begins to move us in that direction. It creates space to test a less burdensome approach, and that is something we welcome.

### **If It Is Safe for Rental Fleets, It Is Safe for Mainers**

Rental fleets represent some of the most intensively used vehicles on Maine roads. These vehicles are driven frequently, often by out-of-state drivers unfamiliar with Maine’s terrain and weather conditions. If Maine is comfortable allowing these vehicles to operate under a biennial inspection system, based solely on a sworn affidavit that they will meet or exceed state standards, then the argument for requiring annual inspections for ordinary Maine drivers becomes increasingly difficult to justify.

Rental cars typically accumulate 20,000 or more miles per year, compared to the national average of about 13,000 miles.<sup>1</sup> That represents roughly 65 percent more distance driven each year. If biennial inspections are considered safe for these high-utilization rental fleets, it follows that they would also be safe for the average Maine family vehicle, which is driven significantly fewer miles annually.

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<sup>1</sup><https://www.lendingtree.com/auto/buying-a-rental-car>



## **Generating Real-World Evidence**

MPI also supports LD 2191 because it presents an opportunity to gather meaningful, real-world data. If safety outcomes remain unchanged under a biennial inspection model extended to these vehicles—and we are confident they will—it will further demonstrate that Maine’s annual inspection requirement is unnecessary and overly burdensome.

Dozens of states operate safely without annual vehicle inspection mandates, and Maine’s continued insistence on maintaining one places Mainers at a financial disadvantage, requiring them to spend time and money complying with a regulatory scheme that the majority of the country has rejected.

This is not just a regulatory tweak. It is, in effect, a pilot program, and if that pilot program demonstrates what dozens of other states have already concluded (that mandatory annual inspections are not necessary for roadway safety), then lawmakers will have concrete justification to expand reform to every Maine driver.

## **Regulatory Relief Should Not Be Reserved for the Largest Companies**

While we support the direction of this bill, we must express concern about one aspect of its design. LD 2191 limits eligibility to businesses with at least 1,000 noncommercial motor vehicles registered in the state per year. We do not support regulatory carve-outs that benefit only the largest market participants. Public policy should not pick winners and losers in the free market. If biennial inspections are sound policy, then they should be considered sound policy regardless of a rental business’s fleet size. Smaller rental companies should not be excluded from regulatory relief simply because they lack the scale of some of their larger competitors. If a company in Maine is registered as a rental fleet operator, they should have access to the regulatory relief offered by this bill.

## **The End Goal**

Our ultimate position remains unchanged, Maine should eliminate mandatory vehicle inspections entirely. Short of full repeal, the state should move to a biennial system for all drivers. LD 2191 does not go that far, but it moves the conversation forward and creates an opportunity to demonstrate that less burdensome regulation can occur while still maintaining public safety. We encourage you to consider amendments that expand eligibility beyond the largest rental fleets and continue working toward broader reform of Maine’s vehicle inspection program.



For these reasons, Maine Policy Institute strongly urges this committee to vote “Ought to Pass” on LD 2191. Thank you for your time and consideration.