

Testimony of the Maine Municipal Association

In Support of***LD 2223, An Act to Increase Funding for Construction Plan Reviews and Clarify Rule-making Authority for Municipal Reviews of Development***

March 2, 2026

Senator Beebe-Center, Representative Hasenfus, and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety, my name is Tanya Emery, and I am providing testimony today in support of LD 2223 on behalf of the Maine Municipal Association's (MMA) Legislative Policy Committee (LPC). MMA is a nonpartisan, nonprofit member service organization that aims to help provide policy solutions that work for all residents of Maine. The LPC is composed of seventy municipal officials from across Maine, elected by their peers to represent member communities.

I had the opportunity to sit in on several LD 1005 working group meetings and applaud the legislature and working group for recognizing the value of this partnership model between state and local governments that have the capacity and support to contribute. This type of voluntary and structured delegation can vastly improve the permitting environment, which is critical for Maine's housing and economic development goals.

From a municipal perspective, this bill would create a practical, efficient option for municipal reviews of development. Allowing those communities that can meet these stringent standards to review permits locally, while staying aligned with the critical review criteria used by the State Fire Marshal's Office within the Department of Public Safety (DPS), provides an additional pathway for permitting to reduce construction delays. Where qualified local resources exist, this bill allows DPS to recognize and utilize that expertise, reflecting trust in municipalities that meet the rigorous standards necessary for local review.

This legislation represents a thoughtful, collaborative approach to improving our fire permitting system. It creates an optional pathway for qualified municipalities to assist in plan review, helping reduce delays while maintaining safety. By strengthening the partnership between municipalities and the Office of the State Fire Marshal, this bill supports public safety, economic development, and government efficiency. For these reasons, MMA's LPC urges the committee to support LD 2223.

Thank you for your time and attention to this matter, and I am happy to answer any questions you might have.

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