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Susan Hawes – Bangor  
Liam LaFountain – Biddeford  
Carl Sheline – Lewiston  
Mark Dion – Portland  
Adam Lachman – Rockland



Jodi MacPhail – Saco  
Becky Brink – Sanford  
Elyse Tipton – South Portland  
Michael Morris – Waterville  
David Morse – Westbrook

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## **Maine Mayors Coalition Testimony on LD 2232 An Act to Increase County Jail Funding (Emergency)**

Senator Beebe-Center, Representative Hasenfus and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety, the Maine Mayors Coalition is providing testimony in support of LD 2232, An Act to Increase County Jail Funding as emergency legislation.

The Maine Mayors Coalition is a nonpartisan group representing the mayors of eleven Maine communities – Auburn, Bangor, Biddeford, Lewiston, Portland, Rockland, Saco, Sanford, South Portland, Waterville and Westbrook – and nearly 300,000 residents. The Coalition advocates on behalf of our citizens and municipalities for policies that recognize the vital services Maine cities provide and the positive impact Maine cities have on our state. The Coalition seeks to work in partnership with state and federal elected officials to meet the needs of Maine people.

As you do on the State level, we make every effort to keep our cities' taxes as low as possible while providing our citizens with the municipal services they need. In recent years, it has become more difficult as costs have risen, and property values have spiked. Adding to our cities' tax assessments are ever increasing county budgets, driven in large part by jail funding deficits. The general sentiment is that the State has placed, and continues to place, stringent requirements on jail operations while not adequately funding the accompanying operational costs.

This results in an unfair shift in responsibility for our jails' finances directly onto Maine property taxpayers. You are well aware our cities are responsible for paying a share of counties' budgets. That means mounting jail costs due to unfunded state mandates are passed along to our cities' property owners. Bangor serves as an example of the impact of rising county budgets. Its share of Penobscot County's tax bill is \$1 million higher than last year.

The Maine Mayors Coalition supports LD 2232 as it would provide additional State jail funding in the upcoming fiscal year, continue to increase funding by 4 percent in future State budgets and designate \$5 million for community programs and services. These funds would provide a degree of respite for our cities' already overburdened property taxpayers.

We ask you to please give every consideration to voting ought to pass on LD 2232 and working to ensure the funds are included in the supplemental budget.

Thank you for your time.