

**TESTIMONY  
OF NICK BATTISTA  
CONNECTMAINE AUTHORITY**

Before the Joint Standing Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs and the  
Joint Standing Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology

Hearing Date: March 1, 2023

Hearing Time: 1:00 p.m.

**“An Act Making Unified Appropriations and Allocations from the General Fund  
and Other Funds for the Expenditures of State Government and Changing  
Certain Provisions of the Law Necessary to the Proper Operations of State  
Government for the Fiscal Years Ending June 30, 2023, June 30, 2024  
and June 30, 2025.”**

Good afternoon, Senator Rotundo, Representative Sachs and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs; Senator Lawrence and Representative Ziegler and members of the Joint Select Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology. My name is Nick Battista, and I am the Chief Policy Officer of the Island Institute and Chair of the ConnectMaine Authority. I am here today to testify in support of LD258, the Biennial Budget.

This budget advances the Governor’s guiding belief that to build a stronger, more prosperous state where opportunity is available to all, then we must invest in the infrastructure that supports the people of Maine, our greatest asset.

For the ConnectMaine Authority, the biennial budget presented to you today, does not request any additional funding or contain any new initiatives though, importantly, it will allow for the continued administration of a \$28M competitive grant awarded in 2021 by the National Telecommunications and Information Administration that is bringing broadband to 15,000 Maine homes in very rural, unserved, parts of our state.

## ConnectMaine Authority

	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Current</u>	<u>Budgeted</u>	<u>Budgeted</u>
	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Department Summary - All Funds				
All Other	1,716,285	1,716,285	1,716,285	1,716,285
Total	1,716,285	1,716,285	1,716,285	1,716,285

## Department Summary - OTHER SPECIAL REVENUE FUNDS

All Other	1,716,285	1,716,285	1,716,285	1,716,285
Total	1,716,285	1,716,285	1,716,285	1,716,285

## ConnectMaine Authority

## CONNECTMAINE FUND Z294

## What the Budget purchases:

The ConnectMaine Authority serves as the broadband development authority for the State of Maine and is responsible for accessing federal and other grant funds necessary to expand Maine's broadband infrastructure. The ConnectMaine Authority consists of seven voting Board members.

	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Current</u>	<u>Budgeted</u>	<u>Budgeted</u>
	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Program Summary - OTHER SPECIAL REVENUE FUNDS				
All Other	1,716,285	1,716,285	1,716,285	1,716,285
Total	1,716,285	1,716,285	1,716,285	1,716,285

2023-24      2024-25

Initiative: NONE

	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Current</u>	<u>Budgeted</u>	<u>Budgeted</u>
	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Revised Program Summary - OTHER SPECIAL REVENUE FUNDS				
All Other	1,716,285	1,716,285	1,716,285	1,716,285
Total	1,716,285	1,716,285	1,716,285	1,716,285

## CONNECTMAINE AUTHORITY

The ConnectMaine Authority is a public instrumentality of Maine state government, whose mission is to facilitate the universal availability of broadband to all Maine households and businesses and help them understand the valuable role it can play in enriching their lives and helping their communities thrive. Duties of the Authority include establishing criteria defining unserved and under-served areas; collecting and disseminating information regarding the availability of broadband; promoting and supporting broadband investment; and facilitating state support of deployment of broadband infrastructure. The Authority consists of seven voting members.

On July 15, 2022, the ConnectMaine Authority signed a service contract with Maine Connectivity Authority (MCA) to undertake these duties in a way that maximized Maine's ability to leverage additional Federal broadband funding while streamlining operations and improving coordination with local governments, internet service providers, and others involved in broadband network planning or construction. This combined effort enables the acceleration of planning and funding of projects serving underserved and unserved areas of the State and ensures ongoing alignment of policies critical to achieving universal access. This "single door" solution simplifies access to Maine citizens, broadband stakeholders, and the federal government to State of Maine broadband authority and eliminates public confusion about the roles and responsibilities of the various broadband entities.

## CONNECTMAINE FUND Z294

The allocation request for the ConnectMaine Fund may be found on **page A-139**. This amount is a placeholder as there is no cash in the Fund. **There are no new initiatives for this program.**

**This concludes my testimony for the ConnectMaine Authority.**