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MAINE PROSECUTORS ASSOCIATION
SHIRA BURNS, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

“An Act to Reclassify Certain Offenses Under the Inland Fisheries and Wildlife Laws
and Increase the Efficiency of the Criminal Justice System”
Before the Joint Standing Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety

Public Hearing Date: March 6, 2023
Testimony in Support of LD 428

Senator Beebe-Center, Representative Salisbury and members of the Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety. My name is Shira Burns and I represent the Maine Prosecutors Association. I am here to testify in support of LD 428.

Maine Prosecutors Association’s priority this session has been threefold to address the caseload in the criminal justice system 1) reclassify criminal offenses to civil violations and oppose the establishment of new criminal offenses that do not affect public safety or victim safety, 2) procuring more resources for all parties in the criminal justice system and 3) advocating and suggesting ways within our existing system to be more efficient, victim centered, while adhering to all of a defendant’s constitutional rights. That is the only way we are going to be able to move forward.

LD 428 was a collaborative effort by many law enforcement officials to decide what crimes can be reclassified to a civil violation without affecting public safety. The group also looked at what crimes should still be a Class E offense, but a jail sentence isn’t warranted. The list of crimes started around 150 and was narrowed down to what you see in both LD 428 and LD 429.

As many know, this was proposed in the 130th legislation. The bill that sits in front of you today was the majority report that passed out of the Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety and also passed in the House of Representatives. We are here again this year and are confident this can become law because of the universal backing from everyone in criminal justice and public safety.

By enacting this language, more time will be spent by everyone in the criminal justice system to focus on crimes that do affect public safety and victim safety. For these reasons, the Maine Prosecutors Association supports LD 428 and thanks Representative Pluecker for his leadership in moving the criminal justice system forward.

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Executive Director
Maine Prosecutors Association