



# Penobscot County Sheriff's Office

85 Hammond St. Bangor, ME 04401  
207-947-4585

Troy J. Morton  
Sheriff

March 13, 2023

**LD 756 - An Act to Provide Funding for Positions in the Penobscot County Sheriff's Office**  
**LD 799 - An Act to Provide Funding for Positions in the Penobscot County Sheriff's Office**

## **Support Testimony of Sheriff Troy Morton**

Good morning, Senator Beebe-Center, Representative Salisbury and honorable members of the Joint Standing Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety. My name is Troy Morton; I am the Sheriff of Penobscot County and Past-President of the Maine Sheriff's Association. I submit this testimony on behalf of the Office of Sheriff for Penobscot County.

I stand before you today as the Sheriff of Penobscot County and in support of LD756 "An Act to Provide Funding for Positions in the Penobscot County Sheriff's Office" sponsored by Senator Stacey Guerin of Penobscot County. I also support LD 799 "An Act to Provide Funding for Positions in the Penobscot County Sheriff's Office" sponsored by Representative Joe Perry.

For decades, the Penobscot County Sheriff's Office and Maine State Police partnered in one of the premier resource sharing agreements in the state. It was often referred to as the model for how law enforcement services should be coordinated. The agreement started in the 90's addressing call sharing only, through its many years of success it was modified to include, the sharing of other resources and specialty services.

The purpose of the agreement was to maximize law enforcement responses to calls for service by the public, while coordinating the resources of the Sheriff's Office and the State Police. This agreement was entered into through the joint spirit of cooperation, coordination, and mutual respect between the agencies. It was understood that for any such agreement to be effective, it would require flexibility and commitment by administrations, patrols, detectives, dispatch, and support personnel alike.

In May of 2022, the Maine State Police elected to reduce their commitment to our agreement in order to address mission changes within their own agency. This left a greater responsibility on the Sheriff's Office for rural patrol.

Prior to the change in our agreement, the Sheriff's Office had grown its law enforcement community policing contracts throughout the county. This initiative alone reduced a



# Penobscot County Sheriff's Office

85 Hammond St. Bangor, ME 04401  
207-947-4585

Troy J. Morton  
Sheriff

tremendous impact on the state police. Our office also grew our specialty services such as accident reconstruction, forensic mapping, SRT, drone team and criminal investigative division. These local services are critical to our working relationship with municipal police agencies. We will continue to work together to address future policing needs.

In regards to the rural call sharing change, nearly a year has gone by, and we are able to see the true impact these adjustments have had on our office and the citizens throughout the county. This change has manifested an increase in calls for service, and referrals to the criminal investigative division. It has also had a tremendous impact on support services such as clerical, court officer and other administration staffing needs. With another potential reduction by the state police looming, our office is being placed in a situation where our mission to provide a high level of community policing services to our citizens may be altered. As we search out the best approach to address these staffing needs, I have heard loudly that community policing is critical to relationship between the 44 towns and 11 unorganized territories we provide services to and law enforcement. Dramatically reducing our mission again, especially in the middle of our budget cycle will unequivocally impact community policing in communities throughout Penobscot County

In order to address the staffing needs required by the Sheriff's Office, a funding source needs to be identified, we respectfully come to you seeking the needed financial support at least during the interim, until we fully understand the changes the state police will be presenting. Placing these changes solely on the property tax payers of Penobscot County who already are contributing to state revenues is not an appropriate response. While I support both bills presented, a funding path other than, the Department of Public Safety needs to be developed.

Our Office remains committed to providing high quality rural patrol services to the 44 communities, and 11 unorganized territories, whiling continuing our work with state agencies, providing specialty resources to the entire county with the support of local law enforcement.

I respectfully ask that you support these funding requests, while a long-term sustained funding mechanism be identified.

Respectfully,  
Sheriff Troy Morton <sup>TM</sup>