



**Honorable David Marshall**  
**County Commissioner, District 3**  
**153 Congress Street, Millinocket, Maine**

**LD 756 “An Act To Provide Funding for positions in Penobscot County”**

**And**

**LD 799 “An Act to Provide Funding for the Penobscot County Sheriff’s Office”**

My greetings to the Chairs Senator Beebe-Senter and Representative Salisbury and the members of the Joint Standing Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety. My name is David Marshall of Millinocket. I currently serve as county commissioner for District 3, the northern portion of Penobscot County, which runs from Veazie, to Staceyville, Maine a distance of more than 75 miles long.

I have also had the experience of sitting where you now do as a former legislator from Millinocket, I served on the Correctional Institutions Committee. While in college, where I earned my bachelor’s degree in Criminal Justice, I worked part time as a dispatcher for the Gorham Police Department. This is to share that I have more than a passing experience with public safety matters. This is also why I felt it so important to be with you today to explain my support for these bills.

As a legislator I understand you receive many requests, and you strive to understand and be fair in your deliberation and decision making. I also am acutely aware that you will receive many for requests for funding that you will have in your budgetary discretion. Why then should you consider a request from only one county for funding of a service that they have some significant responsibility to provide? That is the very type of question require of a good legislator and I wish to share some of the reasons these bills have validity and warrant your support.

Let’s start with the nature of public safety in Penobscot County and why it has been the last county to have a major call sharing agreement with the state police.

Here are some factors, Penobscot County:

Is home to the 3<sup>rd</sup> largest populations of any Maine county, **(152,765)**

It has the 2<sup>nd</sup> most towns & cities (55) plus 11 townships & unorganized territories,

It has the 2<sup>nd</sup> largest amount of road miles (over 2350 mile)

It has the 2<sup>nd</sup> highest number of schools 76 (K-12)

Additionally it is home to 4 colleges, including the flagship campus of the University of Maine, six hospitals (3 in rural areas),

Bangor International Airport and the Maine Air National Guard are located here,

As are the Cross Insurance Center, the Waterfront Concert, and the Hollywood Casino.



In the area of public safety there are 11 communities with their own police forces, this means that 44 communities and the 11 unorganized territories depend on the Penobscot Sheriff's Office for patrol and law enforcement services. This example compared to other populous counties is as follows:

**Penobscot 11 town/city departments 20% of the 55 communities**

- *Cumberland County 13 town/city departments 46% of the 28 communities*
- *York County 15 town/city departments 51% of the 29 communities*
- *Androscoggin County 9 town/city departments 64% of the 14 communities*
- *Kennebec County 10 town/city departments 35% of the 29 communities*

As you can see these factors combined place Penobscot County in a some what different circumstance then our friends and colleagues who serve the other four large counties.

It also speaks to why we value the call sharing relationship with our Maine State Troopers. This is a big region with many rural areas. Travelling in my district from just the University of Maine to my hometown of Millinocket is about the same as a commute from Portland to Augusta but to get to the Aroostook County boarder where it ends is still another half hour.

I also ask you to reflect on the fact that the cost to the county to add an officer with equipment, a pro rata share for a vehicle and wages and benefits is approximately \$136,000. It requires three positions to provide the coverage now in place for the 2 remaining sectors that we are contracted with the Maine State Police to share duties on. We had to absorb this responsibility and associated cost mid budget in 2022. Any further changes are unknow but further reduction in call sharing would mean the need to supplement our force with additional positions.

We want to find a solution that provides for the level of public safety now in place, we are not asking for these funds to increase our staffing unnecessarily. WE need the funding to allow us to stabilize the manner in which to provide needed services to the taxpayers and residents of rural Penobscot County.

Thank you for your consideration of these factors, I would be grateful to have earned your support of this request.