

**Testimony on LD 800
before the Transportation Committee of the Maine Legislature,
presented on March 23, 2023
by Charles McGillicuddy of Augusta, Maine**

I am here to speak in support of LD 800 introduced by Raegan LaRochelle. This bill would remove hitchhiking at night from the list of violations.

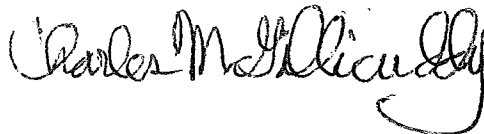
Currently Title 29A - Motor Vehicles and Traffic, Chapter 19: Operation, Subchapter 2: Violations, has in Paragraph 2110 -- Hitchhiking forbidden, which states that it is a violation to hitchhike on any portion of a public way during the nighttime. Included please find the full text of Paragraph 2110.

As part of an effort to limit the consumption of gas and oil, ridesharing ought to be encouraged to lessen the impact on climate change and to improve the economy of the state. Maine does not have a robust public transportation system and for those in rural areas travel for work or shopping or medical care is thereby limited. For those with limited means, including some of our veterans, that places an additional burden on their access to resources. In the winter in Maine nighttime is longer than 14 hours.

Here in Augusta Post 887 of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States has approved a motion to support this bill.

In Cuba drivers of government vehicles are encouraged to pick up passengers if it will not impede official government business. In the Netherlands there are hitchhiking pick up spots with appropriate signage. Cities with HOV lanes are finding that drivers are eager to pick up passengers to have access to the HOV lane. A research study in California showed that hitchhiking is far less dangerous than the public perception. <https://travelhowto.com/is-hitchhiking-dangerous-us/>

I urge the Committee to support this bill as a means of accomplishing the further provision of resources to those in need and granting fairness to the citizens of the state of Maine.



§2110. Hitchhiking forbidden

1. Definition. As used in this section, "hitchhike" means to endeavor by words, gestures or otherwise to beg, invite or secure transportation in a motor vehicle not engaged in carrying passengers for hire, unless the hitchhiker is known to the driver or a passenger.

[PL 1993, c. 683, Pt. A, §2 (NEW); PL 1993, c. 683, Pt. B, §5 (AFF).]

2. Violation. A person commits a traffic infraction if that person hitchhikes on:

A. The traveled portion of a public way; [PL 1993, c. 683, Pt. A, §2 (NEW); PL 1993, c. 683, Pt. B, §5 (AFF).]

B. A limited access highway, including but not limited to the Maine Turnpike; or [PL 1993, c. 683, Pt. A, §2 (NEW); PL 1993, c. 683, Pt. B, §5 (AFF).]

C. Any portion of a public way during the nighttime. [PL 1993, c. 683, Pt. A, §2 (NEW); PL 1993, c. 683, Pt. B, §5 (AFF).]

[PL 1993, c. 683, Pt. A, §2 (NEW); PL 1993, c. 683, Pt. B, §5 (AFF).]

3. Exception. This section does not prohibit solicitation of aid in the event of an accident or by persons who are sick or seeking assistance for the sick, if the sickness is bona fide and an emergency exists.

[PL 1993, c. 683, Pt. A, §2 (NEW); PL 1993, c. 683, Pt. B, §5 (AFF).]

4. Regulation. A municipality may regulate or prohibit hitchhiking on a public way by ordinance. The Department of Transportation may regulate or prohibit hitchhiking on a state or state aid highway in the interest of safety at those locations where accidents may be a problem, limited visibility exists or severe traffic conflicts or other safety factors may occur.

[PL 1993, c. 683, Pt. A, §2 (NEW); PL 1993, c. 683, Pt. B, §5 (AFF).]

5. Posting. An area in which hitchhiking has been regulated or prohibited must be clearly identified by posted signs.

[PL 1993, c. 683, Pt. A, §2 (NEW); PL 1993, c. 683, Pt. B, §5 (AFF).]

6. Forfeitures. For a violation of subsection 2, a forfeiture not to exceed \$50 may be adjudged.

[PL 1993, c. 683, Pt. A, §2 (NEW); PL 1993, c. 683, Pt. B, §5 (AFF).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 1993, c. 683, SA2 (NEW). PL 1993, c. 683, SB5 (AFF).