



Troy D. Jackson
President of the Senate

THE MAINE SENATE
131st Legislature

3 State House Station
Augusta, Maine 04333

Testimony in Support of LD 1457
An Act to Authorize a General Fund Bond Issue for a Jail in Caribou

Presented to the Joint Standing Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs
April 25, 2023

Senator Rotundo, Representative Sachs and esteemed members of the Legislature's Joint Standing Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs, my name is Troy Jackson. I represent northern Aroostook County and serve as President of the Maine Senate. It's an honor to be here today to introduce LD 1457, "An Act to Authorize a General Fund Bond Issue for a Jail in Caribou.

The current jail within the Caribou Police Station is one of only a few in Aroostook County. In recent years, the facility has experienced increased use by local law enforcement across the region. But much like the rest of the station, the 80-year-old building lacks the space to serve all the municipalities that rely on the facility and is plagued with structural issues, including leaky faucets and mold. The jail's central location in the northern part of the state's largest county has led to increased use by local law enforcement and state troopers to conduct interviews, process evidence, write reports, and temporarily hold individuals.

The bill before you today — LD 1457 — would support the construction of a new jail in Caribou to better meet the needs of residents and local law enforcement agencies throughout northern Aroostook County.

Plans are already underway for the construction of a new Caribou Police Station with voters recently approving \$10 million for the project. However, an expanded regional jail was not initially included in the proposal approved by the voters. Funding from the Legislature would cover the additional costs of a jail which is estimated to be \$1-3 million.

To be clear, this new Caribou jail would serve as a secondary facility to the Aroostook County Jail in Houlton — sixty miles away.

The construction of a new jail in Caribou has the support of the Aroostook County Sheriff, Maine State Police' Commanding Officer for the Maine Troop F (which covers Aroostook County), and the Police Chiefs in Ashland, Washburn, Fort Fairfield, and Presque Isle.

*State House (207) 287-1500 * Cell (207) 436-0763 * Fax (207) 287-5862 * Toll Free 1-800-423-6900 * TTY 711
SenatorJackson1@gmail.com * Web Site: legislature.maine.gov/senate*

A new jail will better support local law enforcement in northern Aroostook County and ensure that justice can be served. Chief Gahagan and his colleagues have put together such a thoughtful plan that deserves state support.

Thank you for your time. I hope you will join me in supporting this proposal. I'd be happy to answer any questions.