



Glenn "Chip" Curry
Senator, District 11

THE MAINE SENATE
131st Legislature

3 State House Station
Augusta, Maine 04333

Testimony of Senator Chip Curry introducing
LD 1751, "An Act to Maximize Federal Funding in Support of Emergency Medical Services"

*Before the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services
May 1, 2023*

Senator Baldacci, Representative Meyer, and distinguished colleagues of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services, I am Senator Chip Curry, and I represent the 26 rural, coastal, and island communities of Waldo County. Today I present to you LD 1751, "An Act to Maximize Federal Funding in Support of Emergency Medical Services."

The recent Blue Ribbon Commission on Emergency Medical Services, which I co-chaired alongside House Speaker Talbot Ross, found that EMS agencies across Maine are in dire need of intervention. Without support, we can expect to see agencies close, leaving areas of the state unserved or poorly served and placing additional burdens on property taxpayers.

The Commission highlighted in its final report that EMS reimbursements are not keeping pace with the cost of providing services, and existing subsidies (such as through volunteerism, donations, or voluntary town appropriations) are insufficient to close the gap. In fact, the topline finding of the report identified a need for an additional \$70 million in funding per year for the next five years to support EMS services in Maine.

LD 1751 directly addresses these challenges by maximizing federal funding for EMS providers and increasing MaineCare reimbursement rates. Every state dollar we spend in support of our ambulance services should be used to leverage additional federal dollars. This bill leverages additional dollars by establishing a provider assessment fee and by increasing the MaineCare reimbursement rate.

There are experts here today prepared to speak on how these programs work in other states and within other health care sectors. Broadly speaking, the ambulance service assessment fee would be based on the net operating revenue of each ambulance service provider. This fee would then generate the increased state funding necessary to draw down additional federal funding for the MaineCare program, creating a separate, non-lapsing ambulance fee fund. This fund will be used exclusively to reimburse ambulance service providers under the MaineCare program, supplementing General Fund appropriations.

In combination with the assessment fee established in Section 1, Section 2 of LD 1751 would raise the reimbursement level to 200% of the allowable reimbursement rate under Medicare for a variety of ambulance services



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By implementing LD 1751, we can respond directly to the Commission's findings and provide much-needed financial relief to EMS providers, ensuring they can continue to deliver critical emergency services to Maine's communities, particularly in rural areas where access is often limited.

I ask for this committee's support of LD 1751, "An Act to Maximize Federal Funding in Support of Emergency Medical Services." Since co-chairing the Blue Ribbon Commission I have received numerous calls from town leaders and legislators whose services are facing the financial cliff and at risk of closing.

I do not believe it is right for us to leave this problem only to our towns, cities and volunteers. The state has an important role to play in ensuring the long-term sustainability of EMS in Maine. Thank you for your consideration, and I am happy to answer any questions you may have.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Chip Curry".

Chip Curry
State Senator, District 11
Representing the 26 rural, coastal, and island communities of Waldo County