



MAINE CAMPGROUND OWNERS ASSOCIATION

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Senator Tipping
Representative Roeder
Members of the Committee on Labor and Housing

Re: LD 1964, An Act to Implement the Recommendations of the Commission to Develop a Paid Family and Medical Leaver Benefits Program

Senator Tipping, Representative Roeder and members of the Committee on Labor and Housing. My name is Kathy Dyer and I am the Executive Director of the Maine Campground Owners Association (MECOA). This association is the premier resource for supporting campground owners and promoting camping in Maine. Our mission is to ensure that people who visit our State to enjoy camping, as well as Maine people who enjoy camping, have an enjoyable, fun, and safe time while experiencing all that Maine has to offer to our visitors and guests.

We are testifying in opposition to LD 1964 based on how it will potentially impact the camping industry in Maine. Campgrounds and camping are a seasonal industry that runs from about after Memorial Day through late fall. We rely on seasonal employees to help run the campgrounds and to make sure guests have the very best camping experience. We understand that Maine already has a family medical leave law on the books, but it is not paid leave, and it has components where both the employer and employee are involved in structuring the need and use of leave. As we read this new law, it will be at the discretion of the employee when they take leave and without employees available to do their jobs for up to 12-16 weeks a campground facility will have to bring in other employees, who may not be available for seasonal work, to ensure the safety of their guests. In addition, an employee could work for a part of the season and then take paid leave for the remainder of the time leaving a campground without proper staffing.

In closing, campground owners value the staff that work at their facilities. They are a part of the hospitality industry that people value and in many cases return to year after year. We understand the need for some employees to take time off, and we accommodate that based on particular circumstances, however, we feel that this bill could potentially be devastating for our industry and how it functions.

Thank you for your time and attention. I'd be happy to answer any questions you may have.

Kathy Dyer, Executive Director
Maine Campground Owners Association