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Testimony of Rep. Tavis Hasenfus in support of
**LD 1937, An Act to Remove the Confidentiality of the Transportation of Hazardous
Materials by Railroad Companies**
Before the Judiciary Committee

Good afternoon, Senator Carney, Representative Moonen and members of the Judiciary Committee. My name is Tavis Hasenfus, and I represent House District 57, which includes the communities of Readfield and Winthrop. I am here before you today in support of **LD 1937, An Act to Remove the Confidentiality of the Transportation of Hazardous Materials by Railroad Companies**.

With the recent derailments here in Maine, both in Leeds and Rockwood, concern from communities with high freight traffic like mine has only increased. I am particularly concerned about the Rockwood derailment, as reporting suggests that fuel leaked into the soil and water for days without action. This follows other high-profile derailments across the country, including in East Palestine, Ohio, in March.

According to the Maine Department of Transportation's December 2022 State Rail Plan, Maine's freight rail system comprises 1,072 miles of tracks. In 2019, DOT stated that "total rail volume reached approximately 4.5 million tons and 57,000 railcar loads." While the bulk of goods shipped by rail in Maine were pulp and paper products and related materials, more than 500,000 tons of chemicals or allied products and petroleum or coal products were transported in the state by rail.

Where public information on the hazardous materials transported by freight train in Maine is severely limited, combined with the lack of transparency and regulation in the railroad industry nation-wide, it is imperative that the Legislature makes publicly available information regarding hazardous materials transported in the state, the routes used to transport hazardous materials and the frequency to which they are shipped.

Communities like mine are rightfully concerned. Making this information public would keep members of the public informed and address the questions and concerns that have been raised as a result of recent events. At minimum, someone in state government needs to know what hazardous materials are traveling throughout our state, and on what railways, so that state and local governments are prepared with an effective and immediate response plan should a response be needed.

Thank you for your time and attention. I am happy to answer any questions you have for me.