



STATE OF MAINE
PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

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Testimony of the Maine Public Utilities Commission
Neither For Nor Against
LD 1967, An Act to Support Municipal Franchise Agreements

October 25, 2023

Senator Lawrence, Representative Zeigler, and Distinguished Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Energy, Utilities, and Technology (Committee), my name is Deirdre Schneider, testifying neither for nor against LD 1967, An Act to Support Municipal Franchise Agreements on behalf of the Public Utilities Commission (Commission). The Commission's comments are limited to section 15 of the bill and the sponsor's amendment to the bill.

First, the Commission would like to thank the sponsor, Representative Sachs, for working with staff and Commissioners to create a process for the Commission's involvement that is workable. Section 15 of LD 1967 requires the Commission to adopt rules to establish a process for dispute resolution between a municipality and a video service provider for disputes relating to the negotiations of a franchise agreement or contract, the obligations of the parties under the agreement or contract, or the obligations of the video service provider under 30-A M.R.S. §§ 3008 and 3010, excluding the consumer rights and protections under section 3010. This dispute resolution process is one of two options available to municipalities and video service providers.

This process is similar in nature to other processes the Commission has available for disputes involving interconnectors and the utilities and pole attachers and the pole owners, however the Commission has no experience, knowledge, or expertise in this area. While it will take time and resources to train existing Commission legal and technical staff, at this time, we do not anticipate needing additional staff to comply with this new requirement, but if we receive more requests than we anticipate under this provision we will address this in future budget requests if additional resources are needed.

I would be happy to answer any questions or provide additional information for the work session.