



February 28, 2024

Sen. Anne Carney, Chair
Rep. Matt Moonen, Chair
Joint Standing Committee on the Judiciary
Maine State Legislature
100 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333

Re: *Comments of MSBA regarding LD 2090, An Act to Modernize and Consolidate Certain Court Facilities*

Dear Sen. Carney, Rep. Moonen, and Members of the Judiciary Committee:

On behalf of the Board of Governors of the Maine State Bar Association, we are pleased to provide comments in support of LD 2090, *An Act to Modernize and Consolidate Certain Court Facilities*.

About us. The Maine State Bar Association is a statewide trade association chartered in 1891 by the Maine Legislature. The Association currently represents approximately 3,000 attorneys in the State in both public service and private practice. The Association maintains 29 separate sections covering nearly every field of law practiced in Maine, from Administrative Law to Workers' Compensation Law. Access to justice is a key element of our mission, hence our strong and longstanding interest in issues pertaining to the Judicial Branch.

Background. The Maine Governmental Facilities Authority was established in 1997 to assist State Government in financing the construction and equipping of state facilities by providing access to the tax-exempt bond market. The Authority's board consists of five members, including the Commissioner of Administrative & Financials Services, the Maine State Treasurer, and three additional members appointed by the Governor. The Authority has the power to maintain, reconstruct and operate state facility projects and provide financing and refinancing for projects, among other powers. *4 M.R.S. § 1604.*

Discussion. Current law provides that the Authority may not issue securities in excess of \$189,000,000 outstanding at any one time, of which no less than \$136,000,000 must be specifically allocated to projects relating to the Judicial Branch. *4 M.R.S. § 1606.* LD 2090 proposes to increase the maximum amount of securities that may be issued by the Authority for specific allocation to the Judicial Branch. As we understand it, the purpose of such increase would be to fund necessary projects to expand and modernize court facilities in rural Androscoggin, Hancock, and Somerset counties. As indicated by Chief Justice Stanfill in her State of the Judiciary Address before a Joint Session of the Legislature last week, the court facilities in each of these counties are in great need of updating and modernization in order to appropriately and best serve those communities. As a result, our Association supports this bill to the extent that it would increase the amount of funding that the Authority may provide to these rural counties to address the need for court facility expansion and modernization.

Conclusion. Thank you for the opportunity to provide these comments on LD 2090. If you have questions or need additional information, please do not hesitate to let us know.

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Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jonathan M. Dunitz", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Jonathan M. Dunitz
President, Board of Governors

cc: Angela Armstrong, Executive Director
Rachel Okun, Chair, MSBA Legislative Committee
James I. Cohen, Verrill Dana, LLP
Brody J. Haverly-Johndro, Verrill Dana, LLP