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Testimony of the Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention
Maine Department of Health and Human Services

Before the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services

In opposition to LD 2230, *An Act to Change Department of Health and Human Services Rules Regarding Youth Camps to Major Substantive Rules*

Hearing Date: March 5, 2024

Senator Baldacci, Representative Meyer, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services, my name is Nancy Beardsley, and I serve as the Deputy Director of the Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention (Maine CDC) in the Department of Health and Human Services. I am here today to testify in opposition to LD 2230, *An Act to Change Department of Health and Human Services Rules Regarding Youth Camps to Major Substantive Rules*.

LD 2230 proposes to change the Rules Relating to Youth Camps, Primitive, and Trip Camping from routine technical to major substantive. Maine's youth camp rule, presently entitled Rules Relating to Boys, Girls, Boys and Girls, Day Camps and Primitive and Trip Camping, has been filed with rule amendments as a routine technical rule with the Secretary of State in accordance with MAPA since as early as 1974.

This bill was introduced following the proposal of rule changes by the Maine CDC to chapter 208, a routine technical rule administered by Maine CDC Health Inspection Program (HIP), as authorized by 22 MRS §2496, to regulate licensing standards for youth camps (i.e. condition of the premises and buildings, sanitary facilities, health supervision, staffing, swimming facilities, program safety and fire prevention). The Department hears and recognizes the concerns expressed by youth camp administrators. We have committed to working through this proposal with their deep input. And, we believe that their concerns can be resolved through the current routine technical process established in the Maine Administrative Procedures Act (MAPA).

During the public comment period, the Department received numerous comments in opposition to the proposed rule changes published December 27, 2023. In response to comments received, the Department has publicly made several commitments:

- Providing an updated draft rule for a second round of review
- A second comment period under MAPA requirements for feedback on this updated draft
- Surety that any amended rules will not be effective for the summer 2024 season

The Department expects that the majority of concerns raised by the public will be alleviated with the upcoming second comment period, prior to final adoption as a routine technical rule change.

The Department has maintained a strong working relationship with youth camp licensees and stakeholders. In addition to holding annual pre-and post-season meetings with stakeholders to improve communications, resolve issues, and provide quality inspection services, the Department remains open to input provided by stakeholders and is committed to working effectively with businesses and families to ensure the safety and well-being of youth campers.

The Department's Maine CDC is committed to adopting amendments that are clear, reasonable, and protective of health and safety for licensed youth camps. Now that an active and robust comment period has concluded, the Department is thoughtfully reviewing each comment and reconsidering a number of its originally proposed amendments. The agency is looking forward to sharing new language during the second comment period, all of which reflects considerable public input during this routine technical process.

The Department respectfully requests that the routine technical process remain in place, providing the Department time to address concerns brought forward by the public through the processes afforded within MAPA by holding the second comment period, with the assurance of structured stakeholder engagement prior to proposing changes to Maine's rules regulating youth camps in the future.

Thank you for your time and attention. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have and to make myself available for questions at the work session.