



# **Maine Fire Chiefs'** **A S S O C I A T I O N**

Local Government Center 60 Community Drive Augusta, Maine 04330-9486

Senator Beebe-Center, Representative Hasenfus, and Distinguished Members of the Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee,

I am Chief Bill Gillespie from Liberty, Maine. I am the Fire Chief, and the Legislative Liaison for the Maine Fire Chiefs Association, representing more than 400 Fire Chiefs throughout the state. I am submitting this letter in Support of LD 679 **An Act to Increase the Funding to the Live Fire Service Training Facilities Fund**

In the 128<sup>th</sup> Legislature we presented LD 1845

## **An Act To Provide Incentives To Attract Trained Firefighters to Maine and To Retain Trained Firefighters by Expanding the Provision of Live Fire Service Training**

This marked the beginning of a transformative journey, developing Maine's Rural training program, empowering firefighters to reach new heights. Our mission remains a beacon of hope, and we continue to require your unwavering support.

The original vision of establishing 11 training facilities throughout the state, providing Maine firefighters with the minimum standard of training for their noble profession, is equally vital today as it was in 2018, perhaps even more so. With ongoing uncertainty surrounding the OSHA Fire Brigade Standard, the future of Maine's Fire Service remains a challenge, but together, we can rise above it.

Continued funding fuels our mission, ensuring the training of Maine firefighters and illuminating a brighter future. Under Title 20A §9004, Live Fire Service Training Facilities, we have constructed three of the originally planned 11 facilities and currently have funding for two additional sites, a testament to our collective progress.

Over the past seven years, with your steadfast support, we have witnessed firsthand the profound benefits of this investment for Maine firefighters, inspiring us to push forward. However, there is still much work to be done, and we must persevere. This bill requests an additional \$1 million in the 2026-2027 budget, which will hopefully propel us beyond the halfway mark toward our ambitious goal.

Maine's firefighters are relying on your unwavering assistance once again, and together, we can create a brighter, safer tomorrow.

Respectfully submitted

Chief Bill Gillespie Legislative Liaison Maine Fire Chief