



STATE OF MAINE
Department of Public Safety
Office of State Fire Marshal
45 Commerce Drive, Suite 1
Augusta, ME 04330

JANET T. MILLS
GOVERNOR
MICHAEL SAUSCHUCK
COMMISSIONER
SHAWN ESLER
STATE FIRE MARSHAL

Date

Testimony of Fire Marshal Shawn Esler Office of State Fire Marshal

Neither support nor Oppose LD 427

An Act to Prohibit Mandatory Parking Space Minimums in State and Municipal Building Codes

Sponsored by Representative Amy J. Roeder
Committee on Housing and Economic Development

Senator Curry, Representative Gere, and honorable members of the Committee on ^{HEA}Judiciary: My name is Fire Marshal Shawn Esler, and I am providing testimony on behalf of the Maine Department of Public Safety to testify neither for nor against LD 427 "An Act to Prohibit Mandatory Parking Space Minimums in state and Municipal Building Codes"

I am writing to express my concerns regarding the proposed change to prohibit the state or municipalities from designating a minimum parking requirement for any new developments, land use, change of occupancy of land or buildings.

While I understand the benefits of reducing parking space requirements, such as encouraging mass transit use and potentially lowering development costs, eliminating mandatory parking space minimums is to accept locations providing no parking at all.

Accessible parking requirements exist not only at the state and municipal levels but also under national regulations to ensure that individuals with disabilities can safely and independently access public facilities. By maintaining reasonable parking minimums, communities can promote inclusive environments for all its members.

Additionally, allowing developments to provide minimal or no parking could create severe parking shortages, particularly in areas of public accommodation. Given that Maine's population increases by upwards of 50% during the summer months, a lack of parking could amplify congestion and access issues.

Street parking, where available, can reduce visibility, narrow roadways, and increase congestion. Less to new parking will exacerbate the risks for both pedestrians and drivers. Narrowing the roadways will create increased difficulty for emergency vehicles.

For these reasons, I urge careful reconsideration of the proposed policy to ensure that it balances the benefits of reduced parking requirements with the practical needs of residents, businesses, and visitors. Complete removal of oversight may not be the answer. Thank you for your time and consideration.