



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

2 STATE HOUSE STATION
AUGUSTA, MAINE 04333-0002
(207) 287-1400
TTY: MAINE RELAY 711

Mana Abdi

176 Blake Street, Apt 2
Lewiston, ME 04240
Mana.Abdi@legislature.maine.gov

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Testimony of Representative Mana Abdi presenting

LD 873, An Act to Expand Municipal Authority over Utility Pole Permits

Before the Joint Standing Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology

Good afternoon Senator Lawrence, Representative Sachs and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Energy, Utilities, and Technology. My name is Mana Abdi, and I represent House District 95, which includes a portion of Lewiston. I am here today to introduce **LD 873, An Act to Expand Municipal Authority Over Utility Pole Permits.**

This bill was brought to my attention by a member of our city council. Under current law, only municipalities with populations exceeding 40,000 have the authority to revoke the location of a utility pole when required for public safety and welfare. This bill seeks to extend that authorization to municipalities with at least 30,000 residents.

Modifying the language here to permit a community of 35,000 inhabitants, for instance, includes Lewiston in granting the ability to address and correct infrastructure issues in the form of pole location placement when and if the problem arises via the municipal process. Currently, under Lewiston ordinance, we only have that power when there is a new highway and sidewalk project, at least from my reading, and it seems to clash with the above state guidance.

The City of Lewiston has consistently raised concerns about the timely relocation of above-ground utilities. Many residents rely on bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure for their daily commutes, including travel to work and school. Unfortunately, transitioning utilities from old poles can take years, leaving redundant structures that obstruct mobility and potentially violate Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards. In winter, these obstructions force pedestrians into the street, creating hazardous conditions.

Lewiston has entire poles that have been abandoned, protruding into sidewalks and causing long-term safety and accessibility issues. Others, having sustained damage, have been hastily repaired, posing additional risks. I believe many of the municipalities represented in this room have

faced similar challenges, and this bill would provide the necessary tools to address them more efficiently.

I urge the committee to support this measure, as it directly impacts public safety, accessibility and municipal autonomy in addressing infrastructure concerns.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I am happy to answer any questions.