

**TESTIMONY before the Committee on State and Local Government**  
**Regarding LD 1153**

“An Act to Change in Statute the Areas Represented by the Members of the Board of Trustees of the Cross Insurance Arena from Sets of Municipalities to the County Commissioner Districts of Cumberland County”

**SUPPORT**

**Apr 2, 2025**

Senator Baldacci, Representative Salisbury, and distinguished members of the Committee: my name is Travis Kennedy. I'm the Director of Public Affairs for Cumberland County government, and I'm here to speak on behalf of the County regarding LD 1153.

Cumberland County supports LD 1153, and we appreciate Representative Ankeles's willingness to bring it forward.

In the 1970s, the Legislature established the Cumberland County Recreation District under special law, creating a nine-member Board of Trustees that had the power to independently make major decisions about the operation of the Cumberland County Civic Center - now renamed the Cross Insurance Arena.

The District owned and oversaw the day to day operations of the Civic Center. If the District ran a deficit in any given year, the Trustees passed the deficit to the County Commissioners to pay. The Commissioners did not have any other oversight of the operations or real estate.

The Trustee districts were established at the time through the drawing of seven somewhat arbitrary batches of communities in Cumberland County that, at the time, represented a roughly equal population balance. There were also two at-large members.

In 2017, the Special Law was amended into Title 30-A, essentially placing the District under the oversight of the County Commissioners and making the Board of Trustees advisory to the Commissioners. The County now owns the property, and oversees the national venue management company who operates the building.

The Recreation Board of Trustees, though, still operates under the same Trustee districts that were designed in the 1970's. Those districts have long ago stopped being representative of the

County's population and demographics, are not used for any other purpose, County government or otherwise; and have no definable identity that binds them as independent units.

The Board of Trustees' bylaws already recognize that these districts are outdated. The bylaws define that Trustee districts should instead align with the census-informed County Commissioner Districts. These districts are routinely adjusted alongside all elected districts in Maine, to ensure that they remain geographically and demographically diverse and equal.

Our request with LD 1153 is for statute to mirror those bylaws by replacing the outdated makeup of the Board of Trustees with a seven member board, composed of one member from each County Commissioner district and two at-large members.

This adjustment will clear up confusion, improve the County's ability to recruit qualified Board members, and automatically ensure that the people serving their communities on the Board of Trustees have equal voices in guiding the Commissioners on the use of this public asset.

Thank you for your consideration of this issue. I'm happy to answer any questions you may have.