



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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To the Joint Standing Committee on Transportation, I offer my thanks for taking the time to allow me to introduce LD 547, *An Act to Modify Maine Motor Vehicle Inspection Standards to Permit Exterior, Nonstructural Corrosion That Does Not Directly Affect the Passenger Compartment*. My name is Donny Ardell, and I represent House District 6.

The concept behind the bill is simple and explains itself. In the last few years, the price of used vehicles has overtaken inflation considerably. Vehicles removed from use due to being superficially un-inspectable in Maine reduce supply and drive up demand for replacements, resulting in increased prices and reduced availability on the used market.

Young Mainers, particularly in rural areas, looking for an inexpensive first car to get to school or a job, can't afford the transportation they need to get to the activity that would either fund the transportation, or open up opportunities in the future. Young families are priced out of an inexpensive second vehicle, or even a first one. Mainers on fixed incomes, such as our seniors and those with disabilities, find themselves priced out of their independence.

My proposal, which would permit vehicles to pass inspection with non-structural holes caused by corrosion that neither effect the safe structure of the vehicle nor cause open areas into the passenger compartment, would allow more inspectable vehicles on the road without negatively effecting safety. Superficial vehicle body parts such as fenders, rocker panels, pickup beds, and hoods are non-structural and already have apertures in them from the factory. Licensed vehicle inspectors already assess frames and other parts such as suspension for integrity, and this small change would allow them to pass vehicles with superficial corrosion and get them back on the road so people can use them. If my pickup bed has developed a hole, what is the difference?

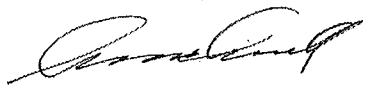
You may hear from an industry lobbyist today representing car sales or body shops; they LOVE this overly restrictive inspection rulemaking, as it drives up demand for their products and services as replacements for vehicles that failed inspection for superficial reasons. However, inflation and labor rates have driven the price tag of those repair and replacement services outside the affordability of working class or fixed-income Mainers.

You will likely hear today from a representative of Maine State Police, who will likely take a position against this bill, claiming spurious concerns of safety or sharp edges, or children or something. Meaning no disrespect to them, I understand their position,

generally: If I was part of an executive branch agency tasked with executing the will of the legislature, but had complete rulemaking control over what was able to be driven on the road as the result of an annual inspection process I completely controlled, why would I want to give that up to a pesky lawmaker, or committee of pesky lawmakers, working for the good of their constituents and the state economy as a whole? I ask this committee to take back our policymaking power from the executive branch, in this small way, and choose to make policy that makes Mainers' lives a little easier.

This is a reasonable bill; it has the potential to increase driver opportunity and shore up transportation availability without compromising safety. I'm happy to accept questions from the committee and I appreciate your kind attention. I believe this change can, in a small way, greatly help Mainers afford to operate safe vehicles, basic transportation that enriches our workforce, and seniors' freedom.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Donald J. Ardell', written in a cursive style.

Donald J. Ardell
State Representative