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**Testimony of Lt. Bruce Scott**

**AGAINST LD 1010**

**An Act to Amend the State's Vehicle Inspection Law by Requiring  
Inspections Biennially**

Senator Nangle, Representative Crafts and distinguished Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Transportation, my name is Lt. Bruce Scott, and I am the Commanding Officer of the State Police Traffic Safety Unit. I am here today to testify on behalf of the Department of Public Safety and the Maine State Police Against LD 1010.

This bill, if passed, would increase the duration between inspections for all vehicles, except commercial vehicles and school buses, from annually to biennially. I think we should consider why the bills presented today don't suggest you make any changes to the inspection standards for commercial vehicles or school buses? Is it because Federal law requires that all commercial vehicles be inspected annually, and it would be too difficult to challenge? Is it because commercial vehicles are larger, heavier and pose a greater threat to the public if there is a vital component failure? Perhaps it is a combination of both? Why do school buses need to be inspected twice a year by a licensed technician and at least once a year by the Maine State Police? I think everyone understands the importance of safety regarding heavy use commercial vehicles. I also think that everyone can relate to the importance of having safe school buses. I would ask why are passenger cars, SUVs and pick-up truck any less important? A 4,000-pound vehicle traveling at 70 miles per hour has 213,947 foot pounds of kinetic energy, when

compared to a 180-grain bullet fired out of a rifle at 3,000 feet per second only has 3,596 foot pounds of kinetic energy. This means that an average sized vehicle has 60 times more kinetic energy at 70 miles per hour than a high-powered rifle. It is scary to think of a vehicle with that much energy having safety defects that could increase stopping distance or reduce handling and maneuverability.

Also, please keep in mind that we are seeing substantial rusting on Maine vehicles and a vehicle that just barely passes inspection today due to advanced rust would get to drive for two more years without getting inspected. Already weakened and stressed frames, suspension, steering and drive train components may be abused for two more years, almost assuring an increase in critical component failures and crashes. Another thing to keep in mind is that a vehicle's crash worthiness decreases as these components wear and rust. A five-star rating can be quickly reduced if integral components are not inspected, repaired or replaced as needed.

I will remind you of my previous testimony in LD 661 regarding the failure rate of vehicles beginning at a year old is 3.2%. While I can't tell you for sure what will happen to the failure rate if we wait two years, I think it is fair to say that the percentage will increase. According to the Maine Bureau of Motor Vehicles the average age of a vehicle in Maine is 12 years old. Per the Elsevier article, the failure rate increases as the vehicle ages and as the miles increase. Having said that, the failure rate for a 12-year-old vehicle would jump to approximately 25%. With that in mind it becomes clear that increasing the time between inspections could lead to catastrophic failures that result in collisions, as the failure rate would certainly increase above the current 25%. Using the information provided in the study, supported by anecdote and the State Police experience, the State of Maine would see a substantial increase in defect-related crashes.

If this bill were to pass, the Maine State Police would have to increase the minimum safety standards to help ensure that vehicles remain safe for two years, which would lead to an overall increase of costs in vehicle ownership. Additionally, there is risk of backsliding in Cumberland County and jeopardizing federal dollars if our carbon credits are reduced by Maine not requiring annual inspections.

For these reasons, we urge you to vote Against LD 1010.

On behalf of the Department of Public Safety and the Maine State Police, I thank you for your time and would be happy to try and answer any questions that you might have.