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**Testimony of Meghan Russo
Maine Department of Transportation
Before the 132nd Legislature, Joint Standing Committee on Transportation**

Neither For Nor Against LD 1340

An Act to Establish the Municipal Stream Crossing Fund

Senator Nangle, Representative Crafts and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Transportation, I am Meghan Russo, Director of Government Affairs at MaineDOT. MaineDOT is neither for nor against LD 1340.

LD 1340 proposes the creation of the Municipal Stream Crossing Fund, a program to be administered by MaineDOT. This fund was originally managed by the Maine Department of Environmental Protection (MaineDEP) but was transferred to MaineDOT in 2023. At the time of the transfer, no dedicated funding source accompanied the program.

The Municipal Stream Crossing Fund is widely supported by municipalities throughout Maine. In 2024, MaineDOT held one round of funding and received 75 applications, ultimately awarding funding to 20 stream crossing projects. Given the increased frequency and severity of storm surges across the state, MaineDOT anticipates a growing number of applications in the future.

LD 1340 seeks to formally establish a new program within MaineDOT. Historically, the program has been funded through bond proceeds. We understand that a bond bill has been introduced this session that would provide funding for the new program. MaineDOT's would have concerns with future funding expectations. It is our hope that bond funding continues to serve as the program's primary financial source and the program, in the future, is not expected to compete with other priorities within the Highway Fund.

MaineDOT does have a few suggested language changes for LD 1340 that we would request that the committee consider. I would be happy to provide a copy of these to your analyst in advance of the work session.

Thank you.