



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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Testimony of Rep. Kristen Cloutier in support of
**LD 507, An Act to Authorize a General Fund Bond Issue to Fund LifeFlight of
Maine**

Before the Joint Standing Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs

Good afternoon Senator Rotundo, Representative Gattine and colleagues on the Appropriations and Financial Affairs Committee. As you know, my name is Kristen Cloutier, and I represent House District 94, which includes part of my hometown of Lewiston. I am pleased to testify in support of **LD 507, An Act to Authorize a General Fund Bond Issue to Fund LifeFlight of Maine.**

This proposed bond issue would provide \$13,485,000 to improve critical emergency aviation infrastructure across Maine. These funds will enhance hospital helipads, fuel systems, automated weather observation systems, communications systems and emergency transport capabilities – all vital components that improve both safety and access to emergency medical services throughout our state.

I want to provide a few examples of specific improvements the bond will fund:

- Rebuilding nine hospital helipads to current safety standards
- Installing 13 new Automated Weather Observation Systems (AWOS) at hospitals, islands, and airstrips
- Updating fuel infrastructure at major receiving hospitals and installing smaller fuel farms at hospitals in Aroostook County
- Purchasing a second airplane to ensure continuity of service when the current aircraft is undergoing maintenance or inspections

The additional airplane is particularly important for Aroostook County residents and provides several advantages:

1. Enhanced all-weather flight capability
2. Improved long-distance efficiency, which frees up helicopters for other emergencies

3. Access to specialized care centers outside New England, such as Cleveland Clinic, Johns Hopkins and Philadelphia Children's Hospital

In addition to the projects funded by this bond, LifeFlight of Maine has successfully partnered with the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and Maine Department of Transportation (MDOT) to secure additional public investments such as:

- The FAA is supporting LifeFlight's national demonstration project for low-altitude instrument flight precision navigation systems
- Rebuilding runways in Rangeley, Jackman and Eastport
- A complete rebuild of the Machias airport

These public investments have been instrumental in helping LifeFlight raise private funds to support their helicopters, medical technologies, education programs and infrastructure improvements.

Thank you for your consideration of this important bond issue that will strengthen emergency medical transportation across our state.

I urge you to vote 'Ought to Pass.'