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Testimony of Representative Kristi Mathieson presenting

LD 1105, An Act Concerning Displaced Civilian Federal Firefighters in Maine

Before the Joint Standing Committee on Labor

Senator Tipping, Representative Roeder and honorable members of the Joint Standing Committee on Labor, my name is Kristi Mathieson and I have the distinct pleasure of representing the beautiful seaside community of Kittery, House District 151. I am here to present **LD 1105, An Act Concerning Displaced Civilian Federal Firefighters in Maine**.

This bill was brought to me by President of the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard Professional Fire Fighters IAFF Local F-123, Kyle C. Moser. The intent of this bill is to allow civilian federal firefighters, working at the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard, Naval Computers and Telecommunications Facility in Cutler and the Togus Veteran Affairs Medical Center in Augusta, in the event of an installation closure or reduction, an opportunity for reemployment as municipal firefighter.

These locations employ 72 federal firefighters, many who were born and raised in Maine and others who have moved to the area and built families and homes here because of their employment. These firefighters not only protect the Department of Defense (DOD), the Department of the Navy and Department of Veterans Affairs' assets in the state, but many also serve as volunteer and/or per diem fire/emergency medical services (EMS) personnel in the municipalities they live.

This bill does not tie the hands of municipal fire chiefs. If anything, it provides the unique opportunity to hire nationally certified firefighters, emergency medical technicians (EMTs), paramedics, driver/operators and hazardous materials (HAZMAT) technicians, which are the basic certifications for all ENTRY level DOD firefighters.

Under this bill, when a federal firefighter is made aware that their job is going to be terminated due to a closure or reduction in force, they will submit to the Maine Department of Labor (DOL) their name, contact information, federal service computation date, time in the federal service and a list of all certifications. The Maine DOL will compile an electronic list of all eligible federal firefighters as established by the act and submit this list to municipalities actively seeking firefighters. This seemed like a win-win bill when I spoke about it with President Moser. We also had our fire chief and our town manager in on the discussions. We all agreed we need to keep our highly qualified firefighter workforce in Maine! Please join me in supporting LD 1105.

District 151: Kittery