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Maine State Police
Traffic Safety Unit
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Testimony of Lt. Bruce Scott

NFNA LD 1531

An Act to Better Protect Animal-drawn Vehicles and Motorists on Public Roadways

Senator Nangle, Rep. 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 NFNA LD 1531.

This bill, if passed, would require a yellow flashing lamp to be mounted on the top of an animal-drawn vehicle that can be seen from at least 1000 feet away, at all times, when being operated on a public way. It also requires at least one of the following, 1) a slow-moving emblem to the rear or 2) microprism tape that is visible from a distance of not less than 500 feet to the rear. Additionally, when the animal drawn vehicle is operated at night or during unfavorable light conditions it would require a white lamp to the front discernable at 1000 feet and two red lamps to the rear discernable at 1,000 feet, or one lamp to the rear visible not less than 1,000 feet and two red reflectors

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discernable at 100 to 600 feet when illuminated by a motor vehicle on low beam.

For comparison, the current law for motor vehicles requires that headlights are capable of furnishing sufficient candlepower to render any substantial object clearly discernable at 200 feet directly ahead. Taillights and brake lights must emit enough light to be visible for a distance of at least 100 feet to the rear. Rear reflectors must be designed, located and maintained to reflect at night on an unlighted highway, from at least 200 feet, the lawful undimmed headlights of a vehicle approaching from the rear. Snowplows when plowing the roads must have an amber light of sufficient intensity to be visible at 500 feet in normal daylight.

The lighting for animal-drawn vehicles required by this bill may very well have an undesirable effect on all other motorists and even that of the operator of the animal-drawn vehicles. The intensity of lights needed to meet these requirements would be extremely bright and glaring. They may even cause temporary blindness of other roadway users creating an unsafe condition while passing by the animal-drawn vehicle, to include "phototaxis" or the moth to a flame effect.

For these reasons, we are Neither for Nor Against LD 1531.

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.

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