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STATE OF MAINE
Department of Public Safety
MAINE STATE POLICE

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Testimony of Major Lucas Hare
Maine State Police

In Opposition of (1600)

An Act to Provide Regional Support Funding for Municipal Police Departments to Support Special Response Teams.

Sponsored by Representative Ankeles
Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety

Senator Beebe-Center, Representative Hasenfus, and honorable members of the Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety: My name is Major Lucas Hare, and I am providing testimony on behalf of the Maine State Police and the Maine Department of Public Safety in opposition of LD 1600, "An Act to Provide Regional Support Funding for Municipal Police Departments to Support Special Response Teams."

This bill aims to require the Department of Public Safety (DPS) to establish and maintain a "Special Response Team Fund" with a purpose of reimbursing municipalities who have Maine Criminal Justice Academy certified swat teams, 10% of their yearly costs for having such teams. The fund will exist from annual contributions from Maine's Counties. DPS is charged with determining each County's annual contribution based on its population vs the Statewide population so enough money is collected to cover 10% of total Statewide cost for municipalities to have a swat team. By April 1st of each year, DPS is responsible for accepting applications from Municipalities for funds and dispersing them when appropriate.

The Department of Public Safety understands that Special Response Teams are expensive, and they are critical for law enforcement to operate safely. I have extensive experience with the Maine State Police Tactical Team and the cost associated with the equipment, training and personnel. These costs vary greatly from year to year, depending on equipment purchases, outfitting new members and call volume. The 10% disbursement outlined in this bill, will change drastically from year to year resulting in the Counties not knowing how much money will be needed until all expenses have been submitted each year.

This bill would also cause a significant mission shift for the DPS. We have never been tasked with collecting taxes and making disbursements like this. The DPS doesn't have the necessary personnel to fulfil the requirements of this bill. Policing in 2025 is more complex and time-consuming than it has ever been, it will be extremely challenging for DPS and the Maine State Police to take on any additional responsibilities with current staffing levels.

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On behalf of the State Police and the Department of Public Safety, we appreciate your careful consideration of these issues. Thank you for your time and we would be happy to answer any questions at this time.

Respectfully,

Major Lucas Hare