



April 29, 2025

Hon. Chip Curry, Senate Chair
Hon. Traci Gere, House Chair
Committee on Housing and Economic Development
100 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333

RE: LD 1467 - An Act to Ensure Accountability for Repairs Conducted by Independent Repair Facilities on Motor Vehicles Under Warranty

LD 1468 - An Act to Establish Standards for Independent Motor Vehicle Repair Facilities in Maine

Dear Chairman Curry, Chairwoman Gere, and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the Alliance for Automotive Innovation, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on LD 1467 and LD 1468, legislation pertaining to independent repairers. From the manufacturers producing most vehicles sold in the U.S., to autonomous vehicle innovators, to equipment suppliers, battery producers, and semiconductor makers – the Alliance for Automotive Innovation represents the full auto industry, a sector supporting 10 million American jobs and five percent of the overall economy.

Automakers make available all the parts, tools, and repair information needed to service vehicles of today and tomorrow. And as a result, our members are the gold standard when it comes to providing consumers with a full spectrum of repair options throughout a vehicle's long life. In fact, over 70% of post-warranty repair work today is performed outside of an automaker's authorized dealer network. The only way this is possible is because of the important role that independent repairers – both mechanical and collision – play in the marketplace.

Understanding that independent repairers are the first choice for many consumers, we signed a national landmark agreement in 2023 with two of the largest and oldest trade groups representing repairers – the Automotive Service Association and the Society of Collision Repair Specialists. This national commitment preserves competition in the repair industry by securing continued access to the necessary tools, information, and data required for vehicle repairs; establishing pathways to adapt to future technological advancements in the industry; and committing to jointly push federal legislation to effectuate these goals. Lawmakers should have confidence in the fact that repairers and manufacturers are committed to collaboration on this issue.

Our members view independent repairers as partners in service to their shared customers. We know that well-equipped shops with well-trained technicians are capable of providing safe and proper repairs, regardless of whether that is within an automaker's authorized dealer network or not. In fact, one of the most prominent cases that has drawn public attention to the importance of utilizing automaker repair procedures when completing any repair involved a dealer-based collision shop. In Seebachan v. Eagle Collision, a \$42 million verdict was handed down to the plaintiffs after suffering life-altering injuries as a result of improper repairs.

In our experience, independent repairers want to be able to do the work for which they have trained and be properly paid for those services. That necessitates access and commitment to relevant training courses, sufficient reimbursement to attract and retain staff, and funds to appropriately equip their shop to meet the needs of their customers. It also requires navigating external actors to ensure vehicle service data can be used as intended – to complete a safe and proper repair – as requested by the vehicle owner.

As the Maine legislature seeks to better understand the landscape of automotive repair, we appreciate the consideration that this committee is giving to the importance of proper training, safety protocols, and use and installation of equipment in cars. Attention to, and understanding of, how car repairs are completed, how repair data is shared, and how technicians are trained to ensure the safety and security of the motor vehicle and the driver, are laudable goals for this committee. We believe exploration of these issues will provide the committee with a better understanding of importance of independent repairs to automotive manufacturers and provide a fuller picture of how the relationship is structured. We wish to serve as a resource for your exploration of these issues.

Thank you for your consideration of our views on these bills. Given our interest on other related matters before the Committee, we felt compelled to provide feedback on these related items. If you have any questions or need additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Kindest regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Wayne Weikel". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "W" and a long, sweeping underline.

Wayne Weikel

Vice President, State Government Affairs