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Testimony of the Maine Municipal Association

In Opposition To

LD 1628 - *An Act to Allow Municipalities to Regulate Exterior Lights*

May 5, 2025

Senator Baldacci, Representative Salisbury and members of the State and Local Government Committee, my name is Rebecca Lambert, and I am providing updated testimony in opposition to LD 1628 on behalf of the Maine Municipal Association's (MMA) elected 70-member Legislative Policy Committee (LPC). For reference, MMA is a nonpartisan, nonprofit member service organization and aims to help provide policy solutions that work for all residents in Maine and the LPC guides the advocacy efforts and establishes positions on bills of municipal interest.

While local leaders appreciate their presumed intent behind this bill, to support local authority over quality-of-life issues, they also believe the bill is unnecessary and could inadvertently cause confusion about powers municipalities already clearly possess.

Municipalities in Maine already have broad home rule authority, and many have long exercised it to regulate exterior lighting, done through zoning ordinances, site plan reviews, and nuisance regulations. Whether it's mitigating light pollution near residential areas, preserving dark skies in rural communities, or ensuring pedestrian safety in commercial corridors, municipalities already have the tools needed—and they use them.

Passing this bill risks sending the opposite message, that municipalities somehow lack this authority now, and need a new statutory permission to act. That is not only incorrect, but it could also open the door to unnecessary litigation or administrative delay as courts and stakeholders debate the scope of implied vs. explicit powers. In that way, rather than reinforcing local control, this bill could undermine it.

Moreover, legislation like this has the potential to clutter the law with affirmations of powers that are already well-established, creating a dangerous precedent that local governments must rely on express permission for each regulatory decision—contrary to the very principles of home rule that Maine has long respected.

Municipalities need clarity, not redundant permissions and respectfully ask that the Legislature trust in local processes already in place and recognize that this issue is already being responsibly managed across Maine without the need for additional statutory language.

Thank you for your time and for considering the municipal perspective on this issue.



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