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Testimony of the Maine Municipal Association

Neither for Nor Against

LD 1830 - Resolve, to Establish a Pilot Program to Protect Firefighters from Cancer

March 7, 2025

Sen. Bailey, Rep. Matheson and distinguished members of the Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services Committee, my name is Rebecca Graham, and I am submitting testimony neither for nor against on behalf of Maine Municipal Association for LD 1830, *Resolve, to Establish a Pilot Program to Protect Firefighters from Cancer*, at the direction of our 70 member Legislative Policy Committee (LPC).

There is already an existing pilot program with vendor screenings for cancer and cardiac risk along with first responder culturally competent wellness and mental health programs as viable options under language enacted last session in Part T of the Supplemental Budget. This pilot program has recently closed for accepting applications and is moving into the award phase expected in a couple of weeks. What is missing from the current program is an avenue to take legislative action on the outcomes of the screenings and how to guarantee the ongoing availability of these options.

MMA reached out to the sponsor of this bill to ask that the resolve be shifted to accommodate the pilot program already in progress under the Office of the Fire Marshal with a reporting mechanism that would include this committee along with the Joint Standing Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety and include authority to report out a bill in the 2nd regular session of the 132nd Legislature on recommendations resulting from the existing pilot program. We remain eager to work to provide additional amended language for the bill if desired.

What is most important about the existing screening program is that it provides screenings for fire, police, EMS, dispatch and corrections all of whom experience health related issues tied to long term exposure to traumatic events.

The LD 1830 proposed resolve is recreating the wheel for this program and narrowly defines who is able to receive the screenings. Cancer screenings for fire fighters are a vital part of the existing screening program, but more importantly, a part of the screening program for ALL first responders. The Association and its members believe these are important elements that should be maintained. Additionally, the added work for another program as drafted is unlikely to be able to be accomplished by the Department of Public Safety and would be better served by directing efforts into bolstering and continuing the existing program, adding this committee to those who should received a report on outcomes of the existing program in 2026, and provide some authority to either committee to introduce legislation based on the outcomes.