

May 9th, 2025

Testimony in support of LD 1835 An Act to Improve Non emergency MaineCare Transportation

Chairman Ingwersen, chairman Meyer and members of the Health
+ Human Services Committee

My name is Patty Barber and I testify in support of LD 1835.

I live in the rural western Maine town of Hiram, where there is very little in the way of transportation services. So many of my neighbors do not have the means nor the ability to drive. If you don't own a car, you can't go anywhere, so I support anything that expands and enhances transportation choices.

The provisions in this bill will allow more efficient utilization of our tax dollars, and upgrade the availability and experience for users.

The Dashboard - Similar to an online review forum for say, local restaurants, this will allow public evaluation of the different transport services. Those providers will naturally self-improve to upgrade their dashboard scores. The dashboard will also allow brokers a quick guide to past performance when choosing services going forward.

Regional documentation - Breaking review of services into regions is important in maximizing efficiency. What works well for Crookston County will look different than what works in Western Maine. This will keep match providers with users according to local resources available.

Combining this information with proposed expanded regional Community Transportation Coordinators will maximize success.

Advisory Committee - Accurate representation is critical. There is nothing worse than well meaning people in decision making capacities dictating solutions assuming to know what is best for other people. Involving those affected is critical in getting this right, ensuring those who rely on this service have an equal voice. This advisory committee will do just that.

Ombudsman - This is akin to the Inspector General of Maine's transportation. An independent voice is key here, to insure maximum use of services, hold brokers and providers accountable, and to coordinate all the moving parts.

Please support LD 1835 to insure our tax dollars are being utilized to their fullest, and to help the greatest number of users get the best service possible.

Our neighbors, co-workers and family members who rely on transportation services deserve no less.

Thank you.