

Chairperson Baldacci and Chairperson Salisbury and members of the State & Local Government Committee.

My name is Jon Beekman. I am 12 year alumni of the Town of Fayette's Board of Selectmen and a 3 year alumni member of the Kennebec County Budget Committee.

I rise and seek your support of LD 1884, to require the referendum and apportionment of an increase from 3 to 5 Commissioners in Kennebec County.

There are several very valid reasons that I ask for your support:

#1 - Each of the current Commissioners represents an average of 40,000 residents in ten communities. Until our current District Commissioner was elected, the Town of Fayette had not met the previous Commissioner who served for decades. Representing this large a geographical and residential population with a very part-time position is not reasonable. Apportioning these Districts to a more reasonable size would reduce this commitment and potentially increase communications.

#2- Many significant decisions are made by only two of the Commissioners obviously when one is absent. This is both inappropriate and not acceptable. It stifles discussion. The reimbursement and budget cost for each part-time Commissioners is very minor in the scope of the total Kennebec County budget. In my experience on the Kennebec County Budget Committee, adding two more Commissioners would be very beneficial in several ways quickly outweighing any additional cost.

#3 - The Kennebec County budget has increased substantially for most municipalities over the last two years, including my Town of Fayette, with over a 35% increase. The County budget makes up approximately 20% of our Town's budget. I believe this is partially due to a lack of oversight and leadership by our part-time Commissioners. Adding two additional Commissioners would certainly increase the opportunity for oversight and communications with the individual County cost centers ie. Departments, and also encourage and allow for a more diverse representation.

I ask for your endorsement of LD 1884 in lieu of a similar bill, LD 1556. LD 1884s requires a positive action by the County Commissioners while LD 1556 provides the Commissioners with an option.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak in support of LD 1884.

Jon Beekman, MPA

Fayette Board of Selectman, 2012-2024

Kennebec County Budget Committee, 2022-2024