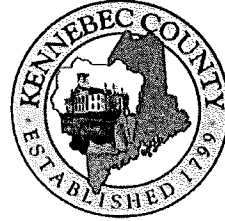


Kennebec County, Maine



May 8, 2025

Joint Standing Committee on State and Local Government
100 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333

Re: LD 1556 - Resolve, Regarding Increasing the Number of Kennebec County Commissioners
LD 1884 - Resolve, to Increase the Number of Kennebec County Commissioners

Senator Joe Baldacci, Representative Suzanne Salisbury, and honorable members of the Joint Standing Committee on State and Local Government.

I would respectfully encourage this committee to vote ought not to pass for both LD 1556 and LD 1884 for the following reasons:

- Either legislative bill was not discussed collectively, nor agreed to by the Kennebec County Commission.
- No discussion was had regarding the need or benefit of such a decision to the taxpayers of Kennebec County.
 - No consideration of cost was determined or assessed: referendum; district apportion; advertising/ administrative costs; increased salary/ benefits; memberships/ training/ equipment/ reimbursements; other associated costs with these legislative bills.
 - County meeting rooms will have to be remodeled to accommodate five commissioners.
 - The Budget Committee will now grow from 9 to 15; this is unmanageable and require two more budget caucuses.
 - Administration is difficult enough with the current social and cost issues facing county government.

It would appear that the root cause of these bills is the statutory requirement regarding a quorum found in Title 30-A §72. Quorum *A majority of the commissioners constitutes a quorum*. This language does not allow commissioners, of a commission of three, to talk outside of a public meeting. This apparently has recently only become a problem (however hasn't been in the 200 year plus prior history of Kennebec County), but for some reason it is now. I have grave concerns with discussions between commissioners outside of a public meeting which could lead to the potential of prior "agreements" without a public discussion of the issue; the addition of two more commissioners would facilitate that environment.

As administrator of Kennebec County, I have serious concerns with any potential, unfunded (*as there is no fiscal note*) cost increases to Kennebec County and its property taxpayers. The County is already struggling with State and Department of Corrections correctional mandates/ standards causing significant increases to property taxpayers. County government deals directly the complexity of its citizens, cost control and social issues (opioid, substance use disorder, domestic/ sexual abuse, to name a few). County government needs to be decisive and sensitive to the needs of the community and not be bogged down by bureaucracy, ineffectiveness and more cost. I do not believe either bill is acting in the best interest of the county or its residents.

Thank you for your consideration of this testimony and my request of this committee; ought not to pass.

Please let us know if you require any further information.

Sincerely,

Scott Ferguson
Kennebec County Administrator