

## SUPPORT FOR LD 1556

Good morning, Senator Baldacci and Representative Salisbury.

My name is Ronda Snyder. I am a resident and elected an official of Kennebec County.

Presently the Kennebec County Commissioners have three members. Having only three members presents logistical issues for the commissioners. For example, they may only speak to each other about county business at the commissioners' hearings. Two commissioners speaking together outside of the official meeting to brainstorm or consider new avenues forward for the county constitutes an illegal meeting. Also, if one commissioner is unable to attend a three-person commission meeting, then there will be a quorum but not equal representation.

Having five commissioners is a better form of governance especially given the size of the county and would better serve the residents. For example, my town of Sidney has approximately 4,500 with a selectboard comprised of five members. As a former Sidney selectman, this form of governance worked quite well and one person never dominated the meetings as may happen with a three member board. Kennebec County has slightly over 127,00 people according to a December 2024 demographic report by Cubit.

Five commissioners will provide:

- a range of representation from geographic areas and interests within their communities.
- A more diverse perspective;
- coalition building and compromise which fosters a balanced policy outcome;
- a reduced and spread out the work load;
- a reduction in polarization between commissioners by not being dominated by one or two commissioners which can be the case in some counties; and
- more voices leading to robust discussions, richer debates and better vetted decisions;

While I am always aware of the costs involved in every part of the government and always want to keep costs low as I do with my own budget within Kennebec County. I understand that this will marginally increase Kennebec County's budget. Increasing the number of commissioners to five is worth the negligible costs to have a better, more diverse, and more democratic, form of government which will benefit the residents of Kennebec County.

Thank you for your time. I am happy to answer any questions you may have regarding this matter.