

*Testimony of Anya Trundy, Deputy Commissioner
Department of Administrative and Financial Services
Testifying in Opposition to*

LD 1776 An Act to Establish the Interdisciplinary Advisory Board for the State House Complex

Sponsored by Rep. Karen Montell
Before the Joint Standing Committee on State and Local Government

Senator Baldacci, Representative Salisbury, and members of the Joint Standing Committee of State and Local Government; I am Anya Trundy, a Deputy Commissioner for the Department of Administrative and Financial Services (DAFS) and I am here today to provide testimony in Opposition to this bill on behalf of the Bureau of General Services (BGS).

LD 1776 has two major objectives with respect to the State House Complex: 1) establish a 13-member advisory board appointed by the President of the Senate and Speaker of the House to advise on health and safety issues and 2) to create a new system for record-keeping. Establishment of an "interdisciplinary advisory board" would duplicate and conflict with existing management of the State House and Cross Office Buildings by the Legislative Council, Office of the Executive Director of the Maine Legislature, and the Bureau of General Services (BGS).

The Executive Director and the State House Facilities Manager communicate directly with BGS' Office of Safety and Environmental Services (SES) and Property Management Division (PMD) about health and safety and general facilities issues, respectively, arising at the State House and in the legislative spaces on the first and second floors of the Cross Office Building. A tested and successful team and processes are in place to field occupational health and safety concerns for the State House Complex to ensure the health and safety of Legislators, legislative and executive branch staff, and the public. The current line of communication is clear and direct, and the parties involved agree it functions effectively. The creation of a 13-member advisory board, with varying degrees of technical expertise and knowledge of the State House and Cross Office Building would only complicate and hinder the response time of the SES and PMD teams. A Board as proposed will also dilute critical decision-making authority, reassigning it from expert staff to a group of appointed volunteers, and potentially result in inconsistent and inexperienced recommendations.

In terms of daily, regular coordination, the State House Facilities Office and PMD have allocated responsibilities between the two offices to reflect expertise, staffing, and statutory directives. The DAFS Commissioner's Office works closely with the Executive Director of the Maine Legislature Council on facility issues, as evidenced by the years of collaboration the project to create an integrated secure screening system for the State House and the Cross Office Building has involved.

More specifically, SES staffing includes a Certified Indoor Environmental Consultant, with over 25 years' experience in assessing indoor environments and air quality issues and providing

solutions through a network of outside consultants and certified or licensed contractors. The SES staff provides asbestos, lead and indoor air quality assessment and mitigation oversight services for all State-owned and lease facilities.

In terms of indoor air quality, SES typically receives notices of issues that may pose a health risk to employees in their work environment, either through email or phone contact. These include such things as suspected mold growth on an indoor building material, or a concern for lead or asbestos content of a material planned to be demolished for renovation. Reports also include employee health issues suspected of being caused by poor indoor air quality. SES conducts investigations into each of these complaints and their indoor environment. SES typically responds the same day that a complaint or report is received, and is usually on-site within one or two days, depending on the severity of the concern. In 2024, SES responded to 80 separate incidents involving air quality, mold, asbestos, lead, radon, and other hazardous materials issues. Among these, 43 on-site assessments were conducted, resulting in 14 technical reports being produced. Of these assessments, 29 involved mold or other airborne allergens, five involved odors, six involved asbestos, two involved lead-based paint, and one involved radon. Typical corrective actions include removal or cleaning of contaminated building materials, adjustments to or modifications of ventilation equipment, and employee education to understand assessment findings or change behaviors such as housekeeping.

SES, after recently assessing and discovering the radon issue in the State House, provided and implemented an interim ventilation solution to bring radon levels down below the recommended EPA limit, allowing the time necessary to conduct the engineering study that will provide a permanent solution. On a larger scale, BGS is actively studying radon remediation, air quality, and ventilation in both the State House and Cross Office Building. Mechanical engineers are under contract for this work. The Governor's budget included a request for MGFA bond authorization that includes \$2 million per building, anticipating system upgrades in both buildings if the bond authorization passes or other funding is provided.

5 MRS §1742-G (3), requires BGS to establish and maintain an electronic database including, for each State-owned or leased building: results of inventory and plans for mitigation, remediation, abatement or containment of asbestos, lead, black mold, radon, and other substances that may be harmful to human health. SES created and maintains this database in compliance with statute for not only the State House Complex, but for all State-owned and leased buildings. The current historical assessments with mitigation details are publicly available and located on the BGS home page. Creating a second stand-alone database just for the State House Complex, as proposed by LD 1776, would be redundant and is unnecessary.

Finally, LD 1776 seeks to establish a website for Legislators, legislative and executive branch staffs and the public to submit questions and concerns about occupational health and safety within the State House complex. The proposed website would divert questions from the staff with expertise to respond, cause delays and confusion, and would impede timely response.

For these reasons, we oppose LD 1776. Thank you for your consideration. I am happy to answer questions from the Committee.