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LD 2016 -An Act to Eliminate the Thermal Imaging Camera Program

Senator Beebe-Center, Representative Hasenfus, and honorable members of the Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee, my name is Shawn Esler, and it is a privilege to serve as the State Fire Marshal.

I am here today to testify in **support** of LD 2016. This bill repeals the Thermal Imaging Camera Program established in 2001 under Title 25 M.R.S.A. §2403, a program that was created at a time when thermal imaging technology was expensive, limited in availability, and often beyond the financial reach of smaller fire departments. The program served an important purpose at its inception by supporting firefighter safety through bulk purchasing and interest-free loans.

However, over the past two decades, the fire service landscape has changed significantly. Thermal imaging cameras are now widely available from multiple vendors at competitive prices, and departments have access to alternative funding sources, including federal Assistance to Firefighters Grants, local capital funding, and private donations. As a result, the statutory program has become outdated and is no longer funded.

Repealing this program removes an unnecessary administrative structure while in no way diminishing the importance of thermal imaging technology or the importance of our firefighters. This bill reflects current market realities, cleans up the statute, and allows the Department to focus resources on higher-priority public safety initiatives.

For these reasons, the Department of Public Safety supports LD 2016 and respectfully urges the Committee to vote “ought to pass.”

Thank you for your time, and I would be happy to answer any questions.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Shawn Esler".

Shawn Esler, State Fire Marshal