

**Testimony of Amanda Johnson for the Maine State Chamber of Commerce
Before the Joint Standing Committee on Labor
“An Act to Increase the Annual Cap on Funds Assessed for the Safety Education and
Training Fund”
LD 1993
January 7, 2026**

Senator Tipping, Representative Roeder, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Labor, my name is Amanda Johnson. I am here on behalf of the Maine State Chamber of Commerce, representing more than 5,000 employers across the state. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in opposition to LD 1993.

The Maine State Chamber of Commerce supports strong workplace safety practices. It recognizes the Department of Labor’s Safety Education and Training Fund's role in promoting injury prevention and safer worksites, a goal shared by Maine employers. We support maintaining consistent funding and preventive efforts that promote a healthy workforce and reduced claims.

LD 1993 proposes a single statutory change: increasing the maximum annual assessment that may be levied to support the Safety Education and Training Fund from 1% to 2% of total workers’ compensation benefits paid, excluding medical payments. While the bill does not require that the assessment be set at the maximum level, it does expand the Commissioner’s authority to assess up to twice the current statutory limit. It effectively allows an increase in the fee level that has been in existence for decades.

We have made progress in reducing total claims, which has lowered the effective cap on training funds. Instead of increasing the fee level, we should explore other methods to support training, recognizing that there are additional means of safety training outside the Safety Education and Training Fund. Before authorizing a higher cap, the Chamber believes it would be appropriate to review data on current fund balances, historical assessment levels, program demand, and anticipated future needs, as well as whether there are general fund or private means to ensure that safety training is maintained.

Specifically, the Chamber notes that employers access workplace safety education through a variety of channels, including workers’ compensation insurance carriers that provide training and loss-prevention services. Understanding how frequently employers rely on these existing resources, rather than on programs funded through the assessment, may help evaluate the appropriate level of the statutory cap.

Employers value predictability and stability within the workers' compensation system, and statutory caps provide necessary guardrails around employer-funded assessments. Any increase should be clearly tied to demonstrated need and accompanied by sufficient transparency to ensure the assessment remains proportionate and appropriately targeted.

In closing, the Maine State Chamber of Commerce supports the Safety Education and Training Fund's mission but opposes increasing the statutory cap from 1% to 2% at this time without a more extensive justification. Additional analysis and safeguards can help ensure that any change is justified, limited, and effective.

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