



Testimony of Jake Lachance, Executive Director, Maine Better Transportation Assoc.

**Before the Joint Standing Committee on Transportation
In Support of**

***LD 2053, An Act to Improve Safety by Allowing the Use of Variable-Message Signs on
Public Service Vehicles***

January 15th, 2026

Senator Nangle, Representative Crafts, and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Transportation. My name is Jake Lachance and I am testifying today on behalf of my employer, the Maine Better Transportation Association, in support of ***LD 2053, An Act to Improve Safety by Allowing the Use of Variable-Message Signs on Public Service Vehicles***

MBTA is a statewide coalition with a diverse membership including members who plan, design, build, maintain, or use our transportation system. These include transportation contractors, engineers and suppliers, bus and rail companies, airports, marine and port interests, municipalities, and others committed to investing in our multimodal transportation infrastructure to boost the state's economy and quality of life.

This bill helps address a real and growing safety concern on Maine's roads and offers a practical solution: drivers are being given every opportunity to know the environment they are about to be in when traveling on our roads. We know the stories all too well, as recently as this very week. This committee just heard testimony about authorizing a memorial highway for Deputy Luke Gross. These incidents are not isolated, and the risk continues to increase as traffic volumes rise and driver distraction becomes more common.

Variable-message signs are already a proven traffic safety tool. They provide **clear, immediate, and adaptable communication** to motorists—warning of stopped vehicles, lane restrictions, recovery operations, or hazardous conditions ahead. Allowing their use on authorized public service vehicles when those vehicles are stationary and engaged in roadside work adds another layer of protection where it is most needed: directly at the point of danger.

Importantly, this legislation is **limited and practical**. It does not require the purchase or use of new equipment. It simply gives public service vehicles the **option** to use variable-message signs when appropriate. Local agencies, utilities, and public safety operators can decide when and how this tool makes sense for their operations.

The bill also maintains proper oversight by allowing the Commissioner of Public Safety to adopt routine technical rules, ensuring consistent and responsible use.

At its core, this is a commonsense safety measure. Better information for drivers means better compliance, slower speeds, and more awareness—conditions that save lives. Giving public service operators another tool to protect themselves and the traveling public is a reasonable and necessary step.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committee to support this bill.

Thank you for your time and consideration.