



Town of Winthrop

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Senator Baldacci, Representative Salisbury, and members of the committee:

I am Anthony Wilson, Winthrop's Town Manager. The Town of Winthrop supports passage of LD 2042, *An Act to Eliminate the Requirement for Municipalities to Provide Public Notice in a Newspaper*.

While the press lobby will oppose this bill, the question before you should be whether municipalities should continue to be required use taxpayer dollars to subsidize a private industry as the primary means of public notice when more effective, no-cost options are available.

I may be in a unique position to comment on this bill. In 2007, I left a successful career as a newspaper journalist because of the industry's trajectory – declining readership, shrinking newsrooms, and corporate consolidation. In the 19 years since, those challenges have intensified.

At the same time, how residents access information has changed dramatically. Municipalities communicate directly with residents through websites, email alerts, and social media platforms that are widely used, immediate, and cost-effective. These tools reach more residents more quickly, at no additional cost to taxpayers.

For that reason, the statutory requirement to publish public notices in newspapers should be eliminated.

Over the past 2.5 years, the Town of Winthrop has spent \$4,090.57 publishing notices in newspapers. While not a budget-busting sum, it is a recurring expense that delivers virtually no value to taxpayers.

The last audited circulation figures I could find for the *Kennebec Journal* date to 2012, when daily circulation was reported at 10,792. Given staffing reductions and the elimination of the Saturday and Monday print editions, circulation has certainly declined substantially since.

By contrast, from January 8-15, 2026, Winthrop's website recorded more than 5,200 user interactions. During that span, the Town's Facebook page generated approximately 35,000 views from an estimated 13,000 people.

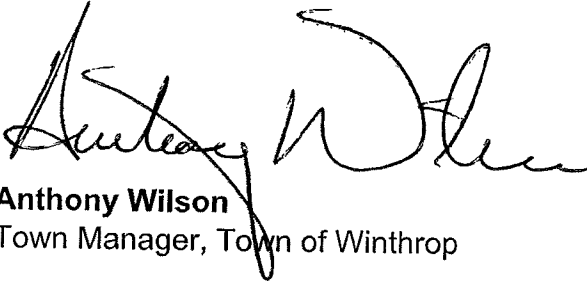
As a practical concern, newspaper production schedules no longer align with statutory notice requirements. Municipalities may wait days for confirmation of publication dates, and even non-urgent notices cannot always be accommodated. While newspapers post notices online, that reality underscores the logic of allowing municipalities to post notices directly on their own digital platforms.

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LD 2042 does not prohibit municipalities from publishing notices in newspapers. Towns that believe newspaper publication remains effective or appropriate would remain free to continue that practice. Nor would passage of this bill prevent municipalities from posting physical copies of notices in town offices and other public locations.

For these reasons, the Town of Winthrop urges the committee to support LD 2042.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Anthony Wilson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, stylized "W" and "I".

Anthony Wilson
Town Manager, Town of Winthrop