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LD 2076 -An Act to Amend the Laws Governing the Reporting of Incidents by Municipal Fire Chiefs

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 2076. This is a technical but important bill that keeps Maine law aligned with national fire and emergency incident reporting standards. For decades, fire departments have reported incident data using the National Fire Incident Reporting System, or NFIRS. At the federal level, the United States Fire Administration is transitioning to a modernized system known as the National Emergency Response Information System, or NERIS.

LD 2076 provides clear statutory authority for that transition. It allows departments to continue reporting under NFIRS through January 1, 2026, and then requires reporting under NERIS or a successor system thereafter. This ensures continuity in data collection, avoids disruption for municipalities, and maintains Maine's compliance with federal requirements.

I would also like to note the significant implementation work already underway. Senior Planner Michelle Mason Webber with the State Fire Marshal's Office has spent the past year ensuring Maine's NERIS program is ready to go live. Together, we have conducted multiple statewide webinars and spent hundreds of hours working directly with municipal fire chiefs to answer questions and support departments through the transition.

Accurate incident reporting is essential for fire prevention, emergency planning, firefighter safety, and federal grant eligibility. LD 2076 does not create new reporting requirements or new costs for municipalities. The State Fire Marshal's Office already supports and funds a statewide reporting system and will continue to do so.

In short, LD 2076 is a necessary housekeeping bill that supports Maine's fire service and ensures uninterrupted access to critical incident data.

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

Shawn Esler, State Fire Marshal