



MAINE AUTO RECYCLERS ASSOCIATION

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To: Joint Standing Committee on Housing and Economic Development

In Support of LD 2211, An Act Implementing the Recommendations of the Automotive Right to Repair Group

Senator Curry, Representative Gere, and honorable members of the Committee:

I am William Bell, a resident of Saco, and am the executive director of the Maine Auto Recyclers Association, a standard trade association consisting of Maine's auto recyclers and also suppliers to our industry. Auto recycling is by volume our nation's largest recycling sector and our association enjoys excellent working relationships with Maine's Bureau of Motor Vehicles and Maine's Department of Environmental Protection. We worked closely, several years ago, with Maine's Secretary of State and BMV to construct Maine's Catalytic Converter law, which has placed a cumbersome requirement upon our members but helped drastically reduce catalytic converter theft in our state.

We are indirect stakeholders in Right to Repair. Maine's independent garages, along with vehicle owners who undertake their own repairs, are our customers. I spent considerable time, in the fall of 2023, distributing signage and handouts to our members in support of the campaign in which 84% of Maine's voters passed the Right to Repair law which, like most citizen initiatives, required some subsequent tinkering to work as intended.

I therefore attended virtually all of the Attorney General's Working Group sessions during the summer and fall of 2024. Perhaps the most important contribution our Association was able to make to the Group's discussion was

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me
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to stress the need to include heavy duty vehicles, namely trucks, in the discussion. Maine is a trucking state, trucks do break down here, and it is important that they can be repaired here rather than towed to a manufacturer's repair facility elsewhere. For evidence of such a repair operation, I would invite this Committee to visit the huge White and Bradstreet truck salvage and repair facility right here in Augusta, on the very northern edge of Augusta.

The point to emphasize, however, is how well the 2024 Working Group functioned. It was not easy, but the work got done. The group was well balanced and well led. Discussion was never cut off. Compromises were made in order to achieve a unanimous report to this legislature.

The responsibilities of the Right to Repair Working Group as set forth in LD 2211 will undoubtedly change. Cars used to be "steel on wheels." They are now fast becoming "computers on wheels". The Working Group carefully considered how to safely provide vehicle owners and their chosen repair facilities with vital telematic access information without creating a big new piece of state bureaucracy. The Working Group took many, many hours to do so, without having to take up the issue at the end of a long, long day of discussing important housing issues.

We ask that the integrity of this Working Group's process be respected and its unanimous report recommendations be enacted as set forth in LD 2211.