



# MAINE MUNICIPAL ASSOCIATION SINCE 1936

60 Community Drive | Augusta, ME 04330-9486  
1-800-452-8786 (in state) | (t) 207-623-8428  
(f) 207-624-0129

## Testimony of the Maine Municipal Association (MMA) In Support of

*LD 2232, An Act to Increase County Jail Funding*

March 18, 2026

Senator Beebe-Center, Representative Hasenfus and distinguished members of the Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee, my name is Amanda Campbell, and I am submitting testimony in support of LD 2232 on behalf of the Maine Municipal Association's 70-member Legislative Policy Committee (LPC).

For the 132<sup>nd</sup> Legislature, the LPC proposed a slate of priority platform bills aimed at reducing property taxes for all Maine property owners. Included in this platform was LD 852, *An Act to Reduce the Property Tax Burden by Adequately Funding County Jail Operations*. Although the bill's language changes were removed during the committee amendment process, LD 852 maintains a funding request and currently sits on the appropriations table with a fiscal note of \$8 million, appropriating \$4 million in FY 2026 and an additional \$4 million in FY 2027. The LPC thanks this committee for their consideration of that funding as part of the report back to the Appropriations and Financial Affairs Committee as they deliberate LD 2212, the supplemental budget.

As originally drafted, LD 852 also proposed to increase baseline funding in FY 2026 and to tie future ongoing funding to the Department of Corrections' budget for state correctional facilities, at a rate of 20%.

In response to the directive provided in Resolve 2025, c. 73 (LD 719), the County Corrections Professional Standards Council (CCPSC), on which MMA holds a seat, presented a report required by the resolve, which directed the council to report back to the committee on several factors involving county jail operations, including "future needs for state support for county and regional jail operations." The language included in LD 2232 is taken directly from that report as recommended by the council.

The state's baseline budget for county and regional jail operations has stagnated at 2021 levels – now representing only 15% of the total \$130 million in FY 2025 jail costs - although approximately 80% of jail operations are dictated by the state. The proposal in this bill increases that annual baseline funding to just over \$28 million and includes a 4% annual inflationary adjustment.

Additionally, the bill eliminates the requirement that jails dedicate 25% of the baseline funding to community corrections, instead providing an additional \$5 million in funds to be used exclusively for those programs.

It is important for legislators to understand the impacts of county services on the municipal budget. In a presentation to the Real Estate Property Tax Relief Task Force, MMA shared an overview of the property taxation process from a municipal perspective. Of note in that presentation were the three main cost drivers in a municipal budget, of which the county budget is one. Due to limited state resources across all areas of county government, and in particular the functional decrease in county jail funding, counties rely heavily on property taxpayers to fund operations.

Increased ongoing funding for jails is critical to maintaining optimum levels of service at Maine's fifteen county jails and to reduce the reliance on, and the burden to, the local property taxpayers. Again, the LPC thanks the committee for including the appropriations of LD 852 in the supplemental budget report back and strongly encourages the committee to vote ought to pass on LD 2232

Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you and share the municipal perspective on this important issue. Please feel free to contact me or any member of the MMA Advocacy team with questions related to municipal operations.