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130<sup>th</sup> MAINE SENATE

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**Testimony of Senator Scott Cyrway**  
**L.D. 242, An Act To Support the Maine Fire Protection Services Commission**  
**Joint Standing Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety**  
**February 22, 2021**

Senator Deschambault, Representative Warren, and fellow colleagues on the Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee: I am State Senator Scott Cyrway and I represent Senate District 16, which includes Albion, Benton, Clinton, Fairfield, Unity Township, Waterville and Winslow. I am before you today to present L.D. 242, An Act To Support the Maine Fire Protection Services Commission.

The Maine Bureau of Labor Standards requires firefighters to train, maintain, and be proficient in specific tasks before they can perform duties required of them at the site of a fire. Since 1999, the Maine Fire Protection Services Commission (MFPSC) has worked with stakeholders to improve firefighter training and education. However, being a large state without a central state-owned training facility or firefighter academy, our firefighters are faced with a challenge when it comes to getting proper and up-to-date training. Most of Maine's training facilities are operated by local communities and volunteers; many do not meet national standards and are failing both structurally and geographically, putting firefighters and Mainer in the more rural parts of the state at a disadvantage.

Since 2018, it has been the primary goal of MFPSC to provide and support live fire training facilities within an hour's travel time for over 90% of Maine firefighters. You may recall that in 2018 the legislature passed L.D. 1845, a bill that appropriated funding for Live Fire Training Facilities (LFTF). The funding was to help with the construction, repair, and replacement of those facilities. Since then, Fairfield, Farmington, and Yarmouth have received grants for the construction of area LFTFs; Auburn received a grant for repairs and improvements to their current facility to put them in compliance with the National Fire Protection Association standards.

Some great steps have been made to accomplish the Commission's goal, and that of LD 1845; however, there was a sunset in that legislation that did not extend appropriations beyond the 2020-2021 fiscal year. The legislation before you removes the sunset provision and will provide an ongoing annual appropriation of \$500,000 in grant money to fund regional LFTFs. Through this ongoing appropriation, MFPSC will be able to help in providing an even greater number of training facilities geographically located across Maine, providing easier access for all firefighters regardless of whether they live in an urban or rural area.

I am asking for your support of L.D. 242 today as I know that the passage of this legislation will be beneficial to firefighters and the Maine taxpayer who relies on our firefighters to show up, be educated and prepared for the duty before them when a fire is underway.

Thank you for your consideration.