



Senator Deschambault, Representative Warren and Distinguished Members of the Criminal Justice Public Safety Committee,

Please allow me a moment to introduce myself. My name is Chief Bill Gillespie, and I am the President of the Waldo County Fire Chiefs Association and the Training Coordinator for the Waldo County Firefighters Association.

On behalf of both Associations, we wholeheartedly support **LD 242. An Act to Support the Maine Fire Protection Services Commission**. Thank you, Senator Cyrway, for sponsoring this bill.

In 2018 I had the pleasure of working with House Majority Leader Erin Herbig and Senate President Mike Thibodeau on LD 1845. **An Act to Provide Incentives to Attract Trained Firefighters to Maine and To Retain Trained Firefighters by Expanding the Provision of Live Fire Service Training**.

With LD 1845, a request for \$1,000,000 was put forth to fund this for 10 years, allowing the opportunity to build 11 training facilities within 100 miles of most firefighters in the State of Maine.

We were successful in obtaining \$500,000 with a sunset provision added to end after 3 years. At this point we are asking for this funding to continue with no sunset provision until our mission is complete. As I am sure you will hear through both written and in verbal testimony your investment has already started paying off. We have successfully built 2 state of the art training facilities in Farmington and Yarmouth and have plans for a third one in Fairfield.

With future funding Waldo County would like the opportunity to update our 40-year-old block & concrete training building. Without the funding of this program, we would have no financial ability to build what is needed to properly protect and train our firefighters in the most realistic method possible.