



Maine Fire Chiefs' ASSOCIATION

Local Government Center 60 Community Drive Augusta, Maine 04330-9486

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Chief William Gillespie

Executive Director

Bill St. Michel

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 Legislative Liaison for the Maine Fire Chiefs Association and Chief of the Liberty Fire Department. I am testifying on behalf of the more than 400 Fire Chiefs in Maine. Please allow this written submission of testimony **in support** of LD 242. Thank you, Senator Cyrway, for sponsoring this bill.

An Act to Support the Maine Fire Protection Services Commission

This bill has had a tremendous impact on Maine firefighters. Over the past 3 years with your support we have started the process of replacing Maine's aging fire training facilities with a safer and more realistic option. The past options of burning acquired structures have become increasingly more difficult and expensive for small communities due to environmental restrictions.

In the 128th session you unanimously supported our plans to bring Live Fire Training Facilities within reasonable travel for firefighters in the State. We have been able to complete 2 training facilities and put them in operation in 2020. For 2021 we have plans for a third training building.

When we stood before this committee in 2018, we looked at this as a 10-year plan to build 11 training facilities. While under review in the Appropriations and Financial Affairs Committee, a compromise was reached to add a sunset provision of 3 years to allow time to review our progress. I hope you agree that we have utilized the funding provided wisely and continue to support your firefighters who have served honorably and courageously through the challenges of this past year.

Respectfully,
Chief Bill Gillespie