

Good Morning Senator Deschambault, Representative Warren and Distinguished Members of the Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee. My name is William St. Michel, retired Fire Chief from the Town of Durham and the current Executive Director for Maine Fire Chiefs' Association

I would like to ask for your support of LD 242 which will continue funding the upgrades and building of Maines Fire Training facilities. I hope LD 242 will be passed and funded in a manner that would allow the work to continue. Through PL 444 we have started to make headway on rectifying the fire training facility situation in the State of Maine but have a long way to go. Unfortunately, PL 444 has a sunset provision and that funding will go away if we don't act. I am asking the Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee recommend funding LD 242 at least at the previous level of \$500,000 a year with no sunset provision. The funding should realistically increase but for now we need to make sure it doesn't go away.

Large or small, career or volunteer the requirements and needed skill sets are the same. The Department of Labor requires all firefighters be trained for the duties commensurate and according to NFPA Standards.

As we become better stewards of our environment the use of acquired structures is in almost every case impossible. Many of our existing facilities no longer meet the current safety requirements and have been sidelined. Forcing current and new member to travel unrealistic distances to an approved facility.

Prior to the pandemic the fire service was struggling to draw and train enough people to maintain staffing. During the pandemic maintaining or teaching critical skills has been difficult to say the least. As we move to the future the demand for staffing and training of critical skills will only increase. Over the past three years of funding the fire service has made noticeable headway, but we have a long way to go. The fire service needs your help!

I hope you will support LD 242! Thank you for your time and your service.

William St. Michel
Executive Director
Maine Fire Chiefs' Association

William St. Michel
Maine Fire Chiefs' Association

Good Morning Senator Deschambault, Representative Warren and Distinguished Members of the Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee. My name is William St. Michel, retired Fire Chief from the Town of Durham and the current Executive Director for Maine Fire Chiefs' Association

I would like to ask for your support of LD 242 which will continue funding the upgrades and building of Maines Fire Training facilities. I hope LD 242 will be passed and funded in a manner that would allow the work to continue. Through PL 444 we have started to make headway on rectifying the fire training facility situation in the State of Maine but have a long way to go. Unfortunately, PL 444 has a sunset provision and that funding will go away if we don't act. I am asking the Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee recommend funding LD 242 at least at the previous level of \$500,000 a year with no sunset provision. The funding should realistically increase but for now we need to make sure it doesn't go away.

Large or small, career or volunteer the requirements and needed skill sets are the same. The Department of Labor requires all firefighters be trained for the duties commensurate and according to NFPA Standards.

As we become better stewards of our environment the use of acquired structures is in almost every case impossible. Many of our existing facilities no longer meet the current safety requirements and have been sidelined. Forcing current and new member to travel unrealistic distances to an approved facility.

Prior to the pandemic the fire service was struggling to draw and train enough people to maintain staffing. During the pandemic maintaining or teaching critical skills has been difficult to say the least. As we move to the future the demand for staffing and training of critical skills will only increase. Over the past three years of funding the fire service has made noticeable headway, but we have a long way to go. The fire service needs your help!

I hope you will support LD 242! Thank you for your time and your service.

William St. Michel
Executive Director
Maine Fire Chiefs' Association