



Maine Municipal Association

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Maine Municipal Association

Testimony in Support of

LD 514- An Act To Establish and Promote a System of Safe Disposal of Expired Marine Flares.

Senator Deschambault, Representative Warren, and members of the Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee, my name is Rebecca Graham and I am testifying in support of LD 514 on behalf of the Maine Municipal Association and at the direction of our 70-member Legislative Policy Committee.

This bill is similar to the amended version that was voted out of this committee in the 129th Legislature and never made it to a full legislative vote.

Municipal officials recognize the need to safely dispose of pyrotechnical equipment and the environmental and health hazard that expired marine flares poses to citizens and wildlife. Some fire departments that have safe storage facilities and often receive these items from residents. Marine flares are considered explosive hazardous waste and cannot be disposed of in regular household trash. Because they contained perchlorate, which the EPA has deemed “a likely human carcinogen” they should not be disposed in areas where the chemical has the potential to contaminate ground water.

Marine flares expire within three years of manufacture and must be replaced to be compliant with marine law which requires a boat over 16 feet in length operating in tidal waters to carry visual distress signals. Maine law requires boaters to carry a minimum of three flares.

Previously, boaters could drop expired flares off with the Coast Guard for proper disposal, but they no longer accept the material. The Fire Marshall’s Office has been increasingly burdened with tons of material for destruction as a result, and needs the capacity to purchase a mobile destruction unit that will assist the fire departments with safe disposal for items there is no local solution for.

Municipal officials believe the fee proposed will support the education, equipment, and staffing necessary for the state to manage this hazardous waste. For all these reasons, officials ask that you again support the efforts made in the 129th Legislature by unanimously voting in support of LD 514.