

**Testimony of Joe Legee, Deputy Director for Maine Emergency Management Agency,
Department of Defense, Veterans and Emergency Management**

BEFORE THE JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND PUBLIC SAFETY

**LD 763 “An Act to Allow State Vehicles Assigned to Maine Emergency Management Agency
Employees To Be Used for Commuting”**

Position – Support

April 5, 2021

Representative Warren, Senator Deschambault, and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety, my name is Joe Legee. I am the Deputy Director at the Maine Emergency Management Agency and I’m here to provide testimony in support of LD 763 “An Act to Allow State Vehicles Assigned to Maine Emergency Management Agency Employees To Be Used for Commuting.”

This bill proposes to amend existing law to allow an employee of the Maine Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) to use a state-owned or state-leased vehicle to commute between home and work. Current law prohibits the use of state vehicles to commute between home and work, except in the case of employees of the Baxter State Park Authority, Military Bureau, and of several law enforcement agencies, to include, but not limited to, the Maine State Police. This bill will authorize MEMA to do the same.

Under [Title 37-B](#), the Director of MEMA is responsible for: representing the Governor in all matters pertaining to the disaster and emergency response of the State; to coordinate the activities of all organizations for emergency management within the State; and to maintain liaison with and cooperate with emergency management and public safety agencies and organizations of other states, the Federal Government and foreign countries and their political subdivisions. Given the likely environment present in areas affected by disaster, it’s critical that the Director, or their designee, have an appropriately marked vehicle to perform these missions safely.

Considering both the fast pace of disaster response operations and the likely hazards present, it is generally not feasible for the Director to drive to Augusta to procure a state fleet vehicle before heading to a disaster-affected area, nor does the Agency have vehicles that are marked appropriately with amber lights. These lights, along with the other markings on the vehicle and the state radio to be installed, are not a luxury – they are standard equipment expected to ensure the safety of state response staff.

The vehicle will carry a cost, which will be borne by the Agency out of our existing budget, using a combination of state and federal grant funds.

With these things in mind, we encourage you to pass LD 763. This concludes my testimony and I'm standing by for any questions you may have. Thank you.