



Maine Municipal  
Association

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Maine Municipal Association

Testimony in Support of

LD 1245 - *An Act To Ensure the Provision of Adequate Personal Protective Equipment to Firefighters  
Who Are Women*

and

LD 1440 - *An Act To Provide Safe Gear for Female Firefighters*

April 20, 2021

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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 1245 and LD 1440 on behalf of the Maine Municipal Association and at the direction of our 70-member Legislative Policy Committee (LPC).

MMA's LPC expressed concern that our firefighters would be in a position to not have adequate fitting protective gear and believe this is a necessary requirement to meet public obligations to protect public safety staff. Officials believe these are already obligations much like tailored protective gear for female police officers, or different sized gear for different body sizes.

Recognizing the difference in capacity between volunteer associations and full vs. part-time municipal departments, officials believe these two pieces of legislation should be passed in concert.

Volunteer firefighters provide vital services to Maine's communities often responding to calls at odd hours of the day and, more likely, after working a full day for another employer. It is becoming increasingly difficult for municipal officials to find willing individuals who have the time and ability to volunteer, and many communities face a lack of volunteers to respond during traditional working hours. Officials believe that anything to the state can do to promote these services should be supported and welcome the effort outlined in LD 1440. A dedicated fund for this purpose would assist any community or association lacking financial resources meet this important protection equipment purchase goal.

That said, the grant process and required post-granting reporting that could provide equipment to small volunteer and part-time municipal departments is often a barrier when administrative staff is equally in short supply. Often municipalities find the processes, particularly at the federal level, too cumbersome for the eligible level of support or find a required local match a struggle. The Association is willing to work with the Fire Marshall's Office to develop a grant process that may reduce these barriers for small

volunteer and rural community support. Officials ask the committee to consider these bills jointly and recommend them “ought to pass”.