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**Testimony of Lt. Bruce Scott**

**IN SUPPORT OF LD 1604 – AS AMENDED**

**An Act To Reclassify Certain Offenses under the Inland Fisheries and Wildlife Laws and Motor Vehicle Laws and Increase the Efficiency of the Criminal Justice System**

Senator Deschambault, Representative Warren and distinguished Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety. My name is Lt. Bruce Scott, and I am the Commanding Officer of the Maine State Police Traffic Safety Unit. I am here today to testify on behalf of the Department of Public Safety and the Maine State Police In Support Of LD 1604, as amended by the January 29, 2022 Amendment that has been shared by the Committee Analyst prior to today's hearing.

As you all know, this bill has evolved over the last several years, primarily due to the countless hours that Rep. Warren and the multiple stakeholders have invested to reach a consensus. With that being said, I am happy to report that this amendment addresses all of the concerns that the Maine State Police and the Department of Public Safety had with the original bill, LD 2043, and the prior language of this current bill, LD 1604, as it relates to the traffic safety laws in Title 29-A.

We believe allowing the Chief Judge to set the fines for these violations while following the pre-determined statutory guidelines provides a consistent, fair, and equitable process, as the amendment proposes.

This amendment to the bill will allow certain laws in Title 29-A to be decriminalized that don't have a safety nexus and will help streamline court processes, without compromising traffic safety.

This amendment to the bill strengthens the current laws that provide authority for law enforcement to tow a vehicle when necessary and appropriate to keep traffic moving safely when the operator of a vehicle is charged with one of the newly formed traffic violations.

In closing, this bill is a great example of what the cooperation and collaboration of interested parties and stakeholders looks like.

For these reasons, we urge you to vote in favor of LD 1604.

On behalf of the Department of Public Safety and the Maine State Police, I thank you for your time and would be happy to try and answer any questions that you might have.