



STATE OF MAINE
Department of Public Safety
Maine State Police
42 State House Station
Augusta, Maine
04333-0020

JANET T. MILLS
GOVERNOR
MICHAEL SAUSCHUCK
COMMISSIONER

COL. WILLIAM G. ROSS
CHIEF
LTC. BRIAN P. SCOTT
DEPUTY CHIEF

**Testimony of Lt. Col. Brian P. Scott
131st First Regular Session**

**IN OPPOSITION OF LD 756 AN ACT TO PROVIDE FUNDING FOR POSITIONS IN THE
PENOBSCOT COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE**

Senator BeeBee-Center, Representative Salisbury and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety, my name is Lt. Col. Brian P. Scott and I am here today to testify on behalf of the Maine State Police and the Department of Public Safety in Opposition to LD 756 AN ACT TO PROVIDE FUNDING FOR POSITIONS IN THE PENOBSCOT COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE.

THIS BILL ALONG WITH LD 799 ALSO BEING HEARD TODAY ARE AN ATTEMPT TO USE STATE FUNDING TO PAY FOR COUNTY LAW ENFORCEMENT SERVICES IN PENOBSCOT COUNTY IN THE AMOUNT OF ABOUT 1.7 MILLION DOLLARS ANNUALLY. ALTHOUGH WE AGREE THAT LAW ENFORCEMENT RESOURCES ARE STRETCHED VERY THIN THROUGHOUT THE STATE OF MAINE, WE STRONGLY DISAGREE THAT THIS IS THE WAY TO RESOLVE THE ISSUE. GENERALLY SPEAKING, COUNTY FUNDING IS FOR COUNTY OPERATIONS AND STATE FUNDING IS FOR STATE OPERATIONS. NORMALLY THE STATE POLICE WOULD NOT WEIGH IN ON MATTERS THAT REGARD HOW THE COUNTY SHERIFF'S FUND THEIR OPERATIONS AS THEIR SOURCE OF FUNDING COMES FROM COUNTY TAXES UNDER THE PURVIEW OF THE COUNTY COMMISSIONERS. HOWEVER, IN THIS CASE THEIR FUNDING REQUEST DIRECTLY IMPACTS THE STATE POLICE SINCE IT COMPETES FOR THE FUNDING OUR AGENCY RECEIVES TO RUN ITS OPERATIONS.

WE HAVE BEEN IN FRONT OF THIS COMMITTEE SEVERAL TIMES IN THE PAST COUPLE DECADES ASKING FOR ADDITIONAL FUNDING SO THAT WE COULD HIRE MORE RURAL PATROL TROOPERS. ALTHOUGH WE HAVE HAD YOUR GENEROUS SUPPORT ON MANY OCCASIONS, YOUR APPROVALS HAVE FAILED TO BE FUNDED BY THE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE. WE HAVE FEWER PATROL TROOPERS TODAY THAN WE DID IN THE 1990'S, WHILE THE PENOBSCOT COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT HAS SEEN THEIR HEADCOUNT MORE THAN

DOUBLE DURING THAT TIME FRAME. ALSO DURING THIS FRAME THE STATE POLICES' RESPONSIBILITIES HAVE INCREASED GREATLY WHILE OUR CAPACITY HAS NOT.

THE STATE POLICE HAS PROVIDED OVER HALF OF THE RURAL PATROL COVERAGE IN PENOBSCOT COUNTY FOR THE LAST TWO DECADES UNDER A CALL SHARING AGREEMENT ALONG WITH MANY OTHER POLICE SERVICES LIKE HOMICIDE INVESTIGATIONS, TACTICAL TEAM RESPONSES, CRISIS NEGOTIATIONS, UNDER WATER RECOVERY SERVICES, CRIME LAB FORENSICS, CROWD MANAGEMENT TEAM SERVICES JUST TO NAME A FEW. WE HAVE DONE THIS WITHOUT ANY COUNTY FUNDING, AS WE HAVE NEVER CHARGED THE COUNTIES FOR OUR SERVICES. DUE TO OUR SIGNIFICANT CAPACITY ISSUES AND STAFFING CONCERNS, WE HAD TRIED TO RENEGOTIATE OUR CALL SHARING AGREEMENT WITH THE SHERIFF'S OFFICE, WHICH WE ATTEMPTED TO DO FOR SEVERAL YEARS WITHOUT SUCCESS. WE FINALLY GOT TO THE POINT WHERE WE HAD TO 'DRAW THE LINE IN THE SAND' AND SAY THAT WE COULD NOT CONTINUE TO PROVIDE OVER HALF OF THE COUNTIES RURAL PATROL ALONG WITH ALL THE OTHER SERVICES THAT NO OTHER POLICE AGENCY COULD PROVIDE IN THE COUNTY, ALONG WITH THE REST OF THE STATE OF MAINE FOR THAT MATTER. SO, WE DID MANAGE TO STRIKE A NEW DEAL WHERE THE STATE POLICE STILL PROVIDES A LITTLE OVER A THIRD OF THE RURAL PATROL COVERAGE WHILE STILL COMMITTING TO ALL THE OTHER POLICE SERVICES IN THE COUNTY.

YOU MAY HAVE HEARD THAT WE ARE WALKING AWAY OR ABANDONING RURAL PATROL IN PENOBSCOT COUNTY OR THAT WE ARE DOING THIS WITHOUT ANY NOTICE TO THE COUNTY. THIS IS SIMPLY NOT TRUE. WE HAVE TRIED FOR YEARS TO ALTER THE CALL SHARING AGREEMENT AS WE CONTINUED TO STRUGGLE TO KEEP OUR HEAD ABOVE WATER. OVER THE YEARS WE HAVE MADE EVERY ATTEMPT TO FIND A SOLUTION TO OUR GROWING CAPACITY ISSUES. WE HAVE ASKED FOR MORE FUNDING TO HIRE ADDITIONAL TROOPERS, WE HAVE PULLED ALL OF TROOPERS EXCEPT FOR ONE OFF OF TASK FORCES, WE HAVE STREAM LINED PROCESSES AND LEVERAGED TECHNOLOGY SOLUTIONS TO MAKE THE RESOURCES THAT WE DO HAVE MORE EFFICIENT, WE HAVE HIRED CIVILIAN STAFF TO TAKE ON SOME OF THE DUTIES THAT WE IDENTIFIED DID NOT NEED TO BE OFFICERS TO DO, AND FINALLY WE HAVE RENEGOTIATED SEVERAL CALL SHARING AGREEMENTS TO BETTER ALIGN WITH OUR ABILITY TO PROVIDE EXCELLENT POLICE SERVICES. THE STATE POLICE IS COMMITTED TO PROVIDING RURAL PATROL IN PENOBSCOT COUNTY AND IS NOT GOING ANYWHERE!

HAVING SAID ALL OF THIS THE STATE POLICE HAS NEVER GONE TO THE COUNTY COMMISSIONERS AND ASKED FOR FUNDING FROM THE COUNTIES TO SUPPORT OUR OPERATIONS, BECAUSE WE BELIEVE THAT WOULD BE HIGHLY INAPPROPRIATE. COUNTY FUNDING IS FOR COUNTY OPERATIONS!

For these reasons, I urge you to vote Ought Not to Pass on LD 756 and LD 799.

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.

INTEGRITY * FAIRNESS * COMPASSION * EXCELLENCE

Offices located at: 36 Hospital Street, Augusta Maine
(207) 624-8939 (Voice) (888) 524-7900 (TDD) (207) 624-7088 (Fax)