



Maine County Commissioners Association

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LD 526, An Act to Provide Funding to Emergency Medical Services Organizations

March 20, 2023

Chair Beebe-Center, Chair Salisbury, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety, my name is Stephen Gorden and in addition to serving as a member of the board of commissioners for Cumberland County, I am writing today in my role as chair of the legislative policy committee of the Maine County Commissioners Association. We appreciate the opportunity to provide testimony to the Committee in support of LD 526.

About MCCA. Briefly, the Maine County Commissioners Association was established in 1890 to assist Maine's county government in providing vital services to Maine citizens in a responsive, efficient, and credible manner. The Association is based in Augusta, represents all 16 of Maine's counties, and is governed by a board with representation from each participating county.

Discussion. Emergency medical services organizations are vital to communities to ensure the health and safety of all people across our State. However, many of these organizations are at immediate risk of failing due to a lack of funding. Such risk has the potential to adversely affect communities across Maine, including counties – particularly rural counties. LD 526 provides a General Fund appropriation of \$25 million in fiscal year 2023-24 to the Maine Department of Public Safety targeting such organizations.

While this one-time appropriation is an important step, we are concerned about whether it is adequate to address the needs of EMS organizations across Maine. Last month, the Blue Ribbon Commission to Study Emergency Medical Services in the State released its Report recommending that the State set aside \$70 million per year in State funding for EMS organizations in order to avoid provider closures. To the extent that it provides adequate funding for EMS organizations, our Association supports the Commission's proposal.

While we have concerns regarding the amount of the one-time appropriation to EMS organizations in LD 526, because the appropriation works to address the critical need for funding and is targeted at preventing provider closures due to a lack of funding, we believe it should be supported.

Conclusion. We appreciate the opportunity to provide testimony on this bill, and if you have questions or need additional information, please do not hesitate to let us know.

Respectfully submitted,

Stephen Gorden
Chair, Legislative Policy Committee

cc: James I. Cohen, Verrill Dana, LLP, MCCA Legislative Counsel

Comments of MCCA re LD 1314

April ____, 2021

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