



Maine Municipal Association

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Testimony of the Maine Municipal Association

In Support For

LD 526 - *An Act to Provide Funding to Emergency Medical Services Organizations*

March 20, 2023

Sen. Beebe-Center, Rep. Salisbury and distinguished members of the Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee, my name is Rebecca Graham, and I providing testimony, in support of LD 526, *An Act to Provide Funding to Emergency Medical Services Organizations*, on behalf of the Maine Municipal Association, which represents the interests of municipal government before the Legislature. The positions of the Association are established by our 70-member Legislative Policy Committee (LPC), who are elected by the councils and selectboards of municipalities in each of Maine's 35 Senate districts.

Unlike law enforcement, there is no state alternative response unit if a community does not have the staffing, funds, or call volume necessary to support an ambulance service. There is not state ambulance service. Often a private company is the only alternative, but all services are struggling to staff appropriately. That said, there are only limited ways in which the greater public at large can be part of these conversations, have a proper understanding of what they need and expect when they call for rescue services before they are needed in an emergency.

Community informed "self-determination" processes draw in significant community involvement in discussions around what types and level of response residents expect, desire, and their differences; such as Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) Basic, Intermediate or Paramedic level transport services, and the cost of such services to maintain and be available when needed. Such discussions allow the public at large to become better informed stewards for the EMS service provision and decide what level of service they desire, and expect, while committing to fund it. Officials understand there are communities who have services that are about to collapse. All services are facing unbelievable pressure.

As there are no details as to how these funds will be spent included in the bill language, officials ask that the funds be used to evaluate the operations of those at risk, often rural, services in tandem with the communities they serve and support investment in areas that promote operations that will be sustainable, have community support and understanding and exist into the future.