



JANET T. MILLS
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MAINE
DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC
AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT



HEATHER JOHNSON
COMMISSIONER

**Testimony Of: Peggy Schaffer
In opposition of LD 1107**

An Act To Create Needed Broadband Infrastructure in Rural Maine through the Establishment of a
Satellite-based Broadband Grant Program

April 6, 2021

Senator Lawrence, Representative Berry and members of the Energy, Utilities and Technology Committee, my name is Peggy Schaffer and I am the Director of the Connect Maine Authority. I am here today to testify in opposition to LD 1107.

The ConnectMaine Authority is a public instrumentality of Maine state government whose mission is to facilitate the universal availability of broadband to all Maine households and businesses and help them understand the valuable role it can play in enriching their lives and helping their communities thrive.

This legislation would create a rebate program for a specific technology. The legislation does not include income eligibility, and there is not a requirement that the customer is unserved. At this point satellite-based broadband does not meet the connectivity and speed standards the ConnectMaine Authority has for broadband. Low Earth Orbit Satellites are not currently selling commercially and have a significant waiting list (which is global) and are building as they go.

While we believe broadband expansion is important, this initiative is not aligned to the Governor's budget and therefore we cannot support the fiscal impact. We continue to explore opportunities to incent broadband expansion and look forward to continued partnership with the committee to make recommendations.

Thank you and I am happy to take any questions.