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Testimony in Opposition to
LD 1291– An Act To Reduce Fire Response Time by Eliminating Standardized Dispatch
Protocols for Fire 9-1-1 Calls

April 15, 2021

Senator Lawrence, Representative Berry, honorable members of the Committee on Energy, Utilities, and Technology, the Public Utilities Commission (Commission) testifies in opposition to [LD 1291](#), *An Act To Reduce Fire Response Time by Eliminating Standardized Dispatch Protocols for Fire 9-1-1 Calls*.

This legislation directs the Commission's Emergency Services Communications Bureau to eliminate Maine's standardized dispatch protocols for fire 9-1-1 calls. The Bureau considers fire protocols to be critical to effectively responding to these emergencies and advises against this proposed legislation for three principal reasons.

First, the previous Legislature enacted *Resolve, Regarding Implementation and Funding of E911 Dispatch Protocols*, enacted as [Resolves 2019, chapter 24](#). This Resolve directed the Commission to convene a stakeholder group to develop recommendations regarding standardized dispatch protocol requirements and use of the 911 fund to cover costs of emergency dispatch protocol implementation. It also directed the Commission to submit a report on the work of the stakeholder group to the Energy, Utilities, and Technology Committee by November 1, 2019.¹ The Commission implemented findings related to fire protocols including reducing the number of calls subject to quality assurance review and providing additional implementation support. No concerns were brought to the Commission's attention during or since its presentation to the Committee last year.

Second, if there is a question regarding any delaying impact of the fire protocol case entry process, the Bureau notes the protocol requires immediate dispatch to matters with urgent threat to life or property including:

¹ See the Commission's [Report on 911 Protocols Stakeholder Group](#).

- Person on fire (outside)
- Vehicle fire (occupants trapped)
- Vehicle collision (on fire and occupants trapped)
- Threatened/Trapped by Wildland fire
- Reported Building/Structure fire
- Trapped in building fire
- Person on fire (inside)
- Sinking Vehicle
- Vehicle in Floodwater

Finally, it is important to note that the national trend is towards increased adoption of protocols. The fire dispatch protocol equips emergency dispatchers to handle a wide range of events, from structure and brush fires to rural county distress and sinking vehicles. A structured protocol system makes it possible to train even new employees to consistently send the right people and equipment to the scene—with the right information—and provide lifesaving support when necessary.

Previous members of this committee recognized the value of these fire protocols and we urge you to allow this program to continue.

The Commission welcomes any questions and will be present for the work session.

Sincerely,



Garrett Corbin
Legislative Liaison

cc: Energy, Utilities, and Technology Committee Members
Deirdre Schneider and Daniel Tartakoff, Legislative Analysts