

Testimony on LD1291, SP0399 An Act To Reduce Fire Response Time by Eliminating Standardized Dispatch Protocols for Fire 9-1-1 Calls

To: Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology  
From: Lieutenant Anthony Favreau Windham Fire Department

Position: AGAINST LD1291

Committee Chairs Senator Lawrence & Representative Berry and members of the Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology, I offer testimony AGAINST LD 1291.

My name is Anthony Favreau I am a Lieutenant Firefighter/Advanced EMT with the Windham Maine Fire Department. I have approximately 28 years of experience in the Fire Service. I also worked 20 years as a Public Safety Dispatcher in Maine before leaving that field 5 years ago for a Private Sector Position. I was also previously certified as both an Emergency Medical Dispatcher and an Emergency Fire Dispatcher. In my current Private Sector position, I work as a consultant working with 9-1-1 Dispatch Centers across the country.

Let me start this by thanking the Public Safety Dispatchers around this State. This week is National Public Safety Telecommunicators Week, and I can say firsthand that Dispatchers in the State of Maine are second to none.

Maine has excelled in how we handle and process 9-1-1 calls. Early on Maine established a caller Standard of Care. This Standard of Care started with providing Emergency Medical Dispatch standardized protocols throughout the state. For those that were around during that time, those Emergency Medical Dispatch Protocols were met with hesitation and resistance from local fire and EMS departments with the concern that it would increase response times. It took some time for agencies to understand the value that these standardized protocols provided PSAPS. The protocols provide dispatchers with invaluable tools to help them gather information, provide pre-arrival and post-dispatch instructions to citizens and visitors that call 9-1-1.

The EFD or Emergency Fire Dispatch Protocols are structured and handled in the same way as the EMD or Emergency Medical Dispatch Protocols, providing that Standard of Care that Maine Citizens expect when they call 9-1-1. Neither the EFD or EMD Protocols dictate when a Dispatch Center can dispatch the call. The statement in the title of this bill refers to reducing fire response time by eliminating the Fire Protocol. If this were a true statement, my belief is that the groups that are bringing this LD for consideration would be looking into all Standardized Protocols as they are fundamentally structured the same. The use of best practice protocol systems derived from National Standard setting organizations do not increase the response time of first responders.

The Windham Fire Department where I currently work uses the other side of the protocols which have the ability for agencies that choose, to set how they respond based on how the protocols codes the call. This allows us to respond with the right apparatus in the right way to the right call. We use both the

Medical and Fire protocols as a tool to set our responses and how we respond. Not all calls that we respond to are time sensitive emergencies, being able to respond safer by eliminating some lights and siren responses increases the safety of the citizens and responders in Windham. Our dispatch center pre-alerts all Fire & Medical Calls and give us the address and nature immediately while continuing through the Medical or Fire Protocol interrogation. This is a workflow issue between the Fire Departments and their Dispatch Centers. If they have concerns, they should work with their partner agencies and Dispatch Centers to improve process.

The Insurance Service Organization sets insurance rates for homeowners and businesses, part of their scoring systems allows added points for departments that participate in structured protocol use.

Maine has established a Standard of Care for both Medical & Fire Emergencies to eliminate any portion of this level of service is a significant backwards step for the State of Maine's Citizens & Visitors. Maine should be proud to be a leader in 9-1-1 services offered to the public.

I thank you for your time in reviewing my testimony,

Lieutenant Anthony Favreau  
Windham Fire Department