

**Written Testimony in support of LD 1484**

Submitted by Sari S. Greene, South Portland, Maine April 27, 2021

Senator Lawrence, Representative Berry, distinguished members of the Energy, Utilities, and Technology Committee. My name is Sari Greene and I reside in South Portland, Maine. In South Portland, I serve on the Economic Development Committee and I am the point person on smart-city high-speed Internet access. I also serve on the South Portland School District Internet Accessibility Steering Committee. I am speaking in favor of LD 1484.

In 2020, I was a Maine Senate primary candidate. Universal high-speed Internet access was one of the central tenets of my campaign. As you all recall, 2020 was different type of campaign – phone calls rather than door knocking became the standard. I had the opportunity to speak one-on-one with thousands of Senate district 29 residents. The conversations often followed the same trajectory – health, education, and economic concerns about the emerging pandemic – and then a discussion of a Maine fueled by imagination and powered by innovation. And an acknowledgement, that the future depended upon affordable and accessible state-wide Internet access.

The pandemic laid bare for all to see that affordable and accessible high-speed Internet access is essential for the health and well-being of all our residents. It is a lifeline to basic services including healthcare, education, job opportunities as well as a lever to change generational poverty. As Governor Mills stated, high speed internet is as fundamental as electricity, heat, and water. It is no longer a luxury; it is a necessity.

The need for universal accessible and affordable high-speed Internet access is not limited to rural areas of the state. Every community throughout our state would benefit from creative, forward-looking, and trustworthy Internet infrastructure investment. I urge you to support the funding and investment power and the proactive clear mandate of the proposed Maine Connectivity Authority. Thank you.

Submitted by:

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