



**Testimony of the Island Institute in Support of LD 1456: An Act to Facilitate  
the Expansion of Broadband**

April 18, 2023

Senator Lawrence, Representative Zeigler, and members of the Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology, my name is Stephanie Welch, and I offer this testimony on behalf of the Island Institute in general support of LD 1456, An Act to Facilitate the Expansion of Broadband.

The Island Institute is a 40-year-old nonprofit organization based in Rockland, Maine. We work to sustain Maine's island and coastal communities. The Island Institute's community development work focuses on the marine economy, climate and energy pilots, small businesses, education, and leadership. Broadband is foundational to all of this work, and all Mainers need to have the ability to access and use high-speed, reliable internet.

The Island Institute has been working since 2015 to support coastal and island communities, along with several inland communities, in their efforts to access broadband. As a Maine Connectivity Authority Regional and Tribal Broadband Partner, we work to support community-driven broadband solutions to ensure digital equity and inclusion and coordination between communities, regions and the state. Navigating pole attachment timelines and costs is often identified a hurdle to broadband expansion in Maine. We generally support efforts to address these hurdles, and efforts to facilitate broadband expansion.