

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF

L.D. 206

RESOLVE, REGARDING LEGISLATIVE REVIEW OF PORTIONS OF CHAPTER 234: LEAD TESTING IN SCHOOL DRINKING WATER RULE, A MAJOR SUBSTANTIVE RULE OF THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES, MAINE CENTER FOR DISEASE CONTROL PREVENTION

Senator Claxton, Representative Meyer, and members of the Health and Human Services Committee. I am Victoria Wallack, Communications and Government Relations Director for Maine School Management Association. I am testifying on behalf of the legislative committees of the Maine School Boards Association and Maine School Superintendents Association in support of L.D. 206.

Our association worked on this bill with the Maine Drinking Water Program staff within the Department of Health and Human Services, including their chief engineer, quality assurance team and rule specialists.

This rule is a result of those discussions, and we appreciate the Water Program's willingness to work with us to make doable what is a massive water-testing project involving all schools, public and private, in the state.

The department established what we believe is a reasonable timetable, recognizing that our building staff are very focused right now on Covid and the cleaning regimen required to keep students and staff safe. The plan is to pilot water testing in the spring, with a statewide roll-out to follow.

Testing will reveal where we have issues that need to be addressed. If mitigation is needed, the School Revolving Renovation Fund has been mentioned as a possible source. We caution against overreliance on that fund since it serves many purposes.

The fund currently has \$1,037,982 in available funds. The first-tier priorities for that fund are health, safety and compliance issues including roof upgrades, improvement to indoor air quality, compliance with Americans with Disability Act requirements, hazardous material abatement or removal; and, other health and compliance issues.

Lead abatement certainly falls under health and safety, but there are many competing interests.

The testing was paid for by the state to avoid a fiscal note on the bill, but the substantial money will be in mitigation where warranted.