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March 4, 2021

Senator Ned Claxton, Chair
Representative Michele Meyer, Chair
Members, Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services
100 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333-0100

Re: LD 269, An Act To Prohibit Smoking in Bus Shelters

Dear Senator Claxton, Representative Meyer, and Members of the Health and Human Services Committee:

This letter is to provide information about LD 269, *An Act To Prohibit Smoking in Bus Shelters*, and the potential impact of the proposed legislation, if enacted. This bill seeks to clarify that bus shelters are considered enclosed public spaces where smoking is prohibited. The Maine Center of Disease Control and Prevention (Maine CDC) supports this bill.

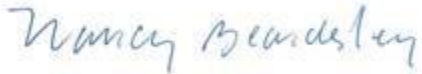
Bus shelters are public places where people who congregate are at risk of exposure to any smoking that takes place in these environments. There is no risk-free level of secondhand smoke exposure, even brief exposure can be harmful to health. Breathing secondhand tobacco smoke can increase the risk of cardiovascular disease, lung cancer and other lung diseases in adults. It can worsen the effects of other illnesses such as asthma. Evidence has shown that approximately 2,500,000 non-smokers have died from health problems caused by secondhand smoke since 1964. For children, secondhand smoke exposure is even more hazardous to their development, causing severe asthma attacks, respiratory infections, and a greater risk for sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS).

LD 269 will ensure that these environments are supportive of a tobacco-free lifestyle for those who frequent bus shelters. Commuters include people with low income who are disproportionately affected by tobacco. Moreover, exposing former smokers to a smoking environment may be a trigger for relapse. This bill will support those who have quit to stay quit and encourage the modeling of healthy behaviors to youth. Ultimately, LD 269 will support the Tobacco Prevention and Control Program's efforts to prevent tobacco-related death, disease, and disability across Maine's at-risk populations.

In summary, the Maine CDC respectfully recommends that the Committee pass LD 269 to clarify bus shelters as a setting in which smoking is prohibited and where Maine's laws for smoking in public places can be enforced. This action will reduce secondhand smoke exposure among people frequenting bus shelters.

Thank you for your consideration of this matter. The Maine CDC is available to provide additional details for the Committee's consideration. We will continue to maximize our public health initiatives to optimize health for the people of Maine.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Nancy Beardsley". The signature is written in a cursive style with a light blue circular highlight behind it.

Nancy Beardsley, Deputy Director
Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention