



Celebrating 100 years
MWUA
MAINE WATER UTILITIES ASSOCIATION
Organized in 1925



April 26, 2025

Honorable Michael Tipping, Senate Chair
Honorable Amy Roeder, House Chair
Joint Legislative Committee on Labor
100 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333

Re: Opposition to LD 575 An Act to Ensure Equitable Access to the Paid Family and Medical Leave Benefits Program by Removing the Requirements that Leave Must be Scheduled to Prevent Undue Hardship on the Employer

Dear Senator Tipping, Representative Roeder and Members of the Labor Committee:

The Maine Water Utilities Association (MWUA) appreciates the opportunity to provide testimony in opposition to LD 575.

About MWUA. MWUA is a nonprofit association based in Augusta that provides support for water works professionals throughout the State of Maine in advocating for safe drinking water through educational and technical programming as well as advocacy on the local, state, and national level. The Association was formed in 1925 and consists of approximately 86 utility and 60 associate members. Maine's water utilities provide service to approximately 700,000 Maine residents, thousands of Maine businesses and public institutions, and millions of visitors to Maine every year.

Discussion. The Paid Family and Medical Leave statute, 26 M.R.S. §850-B (7) presently requires an employee to provide reasonable notice to an employer of an employee's intent to use leave unless the need for the leave is due to an emergency, illness or sudden necessity for taking leave. Use of the leave must be scheduled to prevent undue hardship on the employer as reasonably determined by the employer.

This provision of the statute is extremely important for water utilities. Water utilities are in the business of providing safe and reliable water service to their customers 24 hours a day, 365 days per year. This service is essential for public health protection and public safety. Most water utilities in Maine are small with few employees. If these water utilities are not able to review requests for paid family and medical leave using the standard of undue hardship, critical operational functions may be impacted. This could result in water quantity or quality disruptions and/or increased costs for ratepayers.

Further, we are concerned this legislation seeks to amend a program that has not been fully implemented but is anticipated to have significant impact on Maine employers. This amendment will likely create additional challenges for employers. Rather than seeking to modify this landmark legislation before implementation, we encourage the legislature to exercise patience and evaluate the challenges and benefits of the program after a reasonable period of operation. Making changes now that will likely exacerbate the adverse impacts on employers puts small businesses at risk.



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Conclusion. Maine's new paid family and medical leave program will have profound impacts on Maine's employers including Maine's water utilities. Removing the undue hardship provision will increase the impact on water utilities and potentially compromise small utilities' ability to reliably deliver safe drinking water. Therefore, we urge you to oppose LD 575 and vote Ought Not to Pass.

Yours for safe drinking water,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Roger Crouse", with a stylized, cursive script.

Roger Crouse,
Chair, MWUA Legislative & Regulatory Affairs Committee

cc: James I. Cohen, Verrill Dana, LLP, Legislative Counsel