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Senator Rafferty, Representative Sylvester, and other Honorable Members of the Labor and Housing Committee,

Please allow me a moment to introduce myself. My name is William Gillespie, Legislative Liaison for the Maine Fire Chiefs Association and Chief of the Liberty Fire Department. I am testifying on behalf of the more than 400 Fire Chiefs in Maine. Please allow this written submission of testimony **in support** of LD 305. Thank you, Senator Cyrway, for sponsoring this bill.

An Act to Include Forest Rangers and Forest Fire Prevention Specialists in the Bureau of Forestry's Forest Protection Unit in the Laws Concerning Cancer Suffered by Firefighters

This bill modifies the original bill to include Rangers of the Maine Forest Service to the list of qualified personnel to be considered for the existing cancer presumption law. The exposure to carcinogens through ground and vegetation fire can be absorbed through many ways, increasing potential future health risks.

There is also increasing demand on our Forest Service to perform fire suppression efforts in areas of the state of Maine that do not have a Fire Department. A town that has an organized Fire Department ensures that they have the necessary Personal Protective Equipment. Forest Rangers do not have that luxury, so it is becoming clear that they will be exposed to the same level of carcinogens without any protection.

Please consider the great efforts of our Forest Service for the State of Maine and approve this legislation.

Respectfully,
Chief Bill Gillespie