

LD 876 An Act To Promote Efficiency in County and Municipal Government (Breen)

To: Members, Joint Standing Committee on State and Local Government
From: Lynne Caswell, Esq., Legislative Analyst
Date: April 14, 2021

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file*

<http://legislature.maine.gov/ctl/SLG/04-07-2021?panel=2&time=1&sortdir=0&sortby=2>

SUMMARY

This bill allows county and municipal governments and officials to meet the requirement to provide public notice in a newspaper by electronic posting on the county's or municipality's publicly accessible website.

TESTIMONY¹**Sponsor:** Senator Breen

- Communities struggle to advertise in newspapers
- Will save time and money

Cosponsors: Rep Moriarty; Rep Austin**Proponents:** Nate Rudy, Town Manager (written only: MMA by Rebecca Graham; MCCA by Stephen Gorden)

- Communicating and participating online is increasing
- Will save time
- Will save money (\$100/ad)
- Will not negate public access
- Digital notice may have equal or wider exposure than newspaper

Opponents: Maine Press Association by Jennifer Holmes; Maine Today Media by Courtney Spencer; Sun Journal, etc. by Judith Meyer; Roberta Manter (written only: Ellsworth American/Courier Publications by Chris Crockett)

- 3rd party neutrality of notification will be lost
- One stop shopping for accessing public notices (online search platforms) – benefit to public and potential contractors
- Not everyone has access to broadband
- Not everyone can navigate internet

NFNA: Maine Town & City Clerks' Association by Katherine Jones

- Pros and cons to bill
- Web notices will provide flexibility to municipal officials;
- Lack of broadband access in remote parts of state
- Older citizens do not utilize technology

¹ The section is not intended to reflect all comments and may include unintentionally errors.

INFORMATION REQUESTS / POTENTIAL ISSUESNEWSPAPER CIRCULATION DATA² (2017)

Paper	Print		Digital	
	<i>Weekday</i>	<i>Weekend</i>	<i>Weekday</i>	<i>Weekend</i>
Bangor Daily News	23,960	30,055	1,877	1,877
Lewiston Sun Journal	16,614	17,749	21,172	21,898
Morning Sentinel	8,991	9,495	3,819	3,810
Kennebec Journal	7,060	7,745	2,469	2,480
Portland Press / Maine Sunday	30,568	46,475	7,992	8,031

FISCAL IMPACT - Preliminary (OFPR)

None provided as of this date.

² 2017 Annual Audited Circulation Reports, Infogram @ <https://infogram.com/circ-totals-for-each-pub-1hkv2nwm08gp2x3>