



Maine Municipal
Association

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Testimony of the Maine Municipal Association

In Support of

LD 1300- *An Act To Require County Governments To Coordinate with Municipalities To Create Plans To Address Homelessness*

April 16, 2021

Senator Baldacci, Representative Matlack and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on State and Local Government, my name is Rebecca Graham, and I am providing testimony in support of LD 1300 on behalf of MMA at the direction of our 70-member Legislative Policy Committee.

Municipal officials recognize that service center communities are struggling against the tide of homeless and the complex needs of indigent Maine residents. While all communities have a requirement to protect and assist these vulnerable individuals, most communities lack housing and expert resources to address these issues. As a result, communities with more specialized services available draw residents from other communities to access services.

LD 1300 recognizes that county assessment touches all communities and could play a role in funding a more regionalized care system that would not only support individuals more comprehensively, but make sure all communities have skin in the obligatory services they are directed to provide under General Assistance laws.

That said, officials also recognize that not all counties are created equal and suggest that a degree of flexibility in how the coordination is managed may be required. An oversight mechanism for this program from a broader set of municipal officials and residents in a county should be added to the final bill.

Additionally, as this expands the obligatory services on a local unit of government, the mandate preamble is also required to be added.

Municipal officials ask that if you see this expansion of services as important enough to vote out of committee in an ought to pass posture, that you also convince your legislative colleagues to commit to fully funding the administrative and staffing required for this service expansion at the 90% level required by the constitution.

Not only is this the right thing to do to address a state-wide problem but will it reduce the burden on already stretched county budgets and allow the taxpayer contribution to these services to be utilized fully to meet the bill's suggested goals and not pay for state-created local administration.