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*Testimony of Majority Leader Michelle Dunphy presenting
LD 895, An Act To Make Necessary Changes to State Law
Before the Joint Standing Committee on State and Local Government*

Senator Baldacci, Representative Matlack and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on State and Local Government, I am Michelle Dunphy and I represent Old Town and the Indian Island Voting District in the Maine House. I also have the distinct honor of serving as House Majority Leader. Earlier this year, I served on the Legislature's bipartisan Apportionment Commission. I am here today to present **LD 895, An Act To Make Necessary Changes to State Law**.

This bill serves as a vehicle for implementing the redistricting plan for the Franklin County Commissioners that was laid out in LD 621, which passed with overwhelming support during the Legislature's first regular session. While the Apportionment Commission has concluded its work and passed the constitutional deadline for most redistricting, the Constitution does allow the Legislature until January 15, 2022 to apportion county commissioner districts. Since the Commission only adopted a three district plan, your action is needed to implement a five district plan. Thank you all for taking time during the busy holiday season to complete this critical work.

As this Committee is aware, the idea of expanding the Franklin County Commission was first addressed in LD 940 during the 129th Legislature. After technical concerns with that bill, LD 621 in the 130th Legislature mandated that the Franklin County Commissioners hold a referendum to determine whether the commission should be expanded from three to five seats. In November, the voters of Franklin County strongly supported this referendum by a margin of 5,782 to 4,154.

LD 621 outlined five commissioner districts for the Legislature to adopt in the event that the voters approved this referendum. With one minor exception, this amended bill fully adheres to the districts supported by this Committee on May 26, 2021 and will allow the Legislature to adopt that plan.

In LD 621 and LD 940, it was the intent of this Committee for District 1 to consist of Temple, Wilton and the part of Farmington west of the Sandy River. District 2 would consist of the part of Farmington east of the Sandy River. After reviewing the Census data, it's clear that this boundary line would create an unconstitutionally small district in Farmington. In order to ensure

equal representation, Maine's redistricting laws require that all districts be within 5% of what is known as the "ideal district size." For Franklin County, the ideal district size is 5,891. This is calculated by taking the county's total 2020 Census population and dividing it by five.

To ensure that Franklin County's district meet these legal requirement, this amendment has the Farmington districts' boundary line go along the Sandy River south of the Rt. 2 Bridge and along Town Farm and Fairbanks Roads north of the Rt. 2 Bridge. This can be clearly seen in the attached maps (Figure 2). This will ensure that both districts are well within the 5% threshold. In fact the Temple, Wilton, Farmington district will be just .22% off from the ideal district size, while the part of Farmington seat will deviate by only 2.7%.

This minimal adjustment north of the Rt. 2 Bridge to adhere with the state's redistricting requirements is the only difference between this bill and the bill supported by this Committee earlier this year.

Once again, this bill simply offers the Committee a vehicle for implementing the plan that was approved by this Committee and ratified by the voters earlier this year.

Thank you for your consideration. I am happy to answer any questions.

Figure1: Five District Plan Configured to Align with LD 621

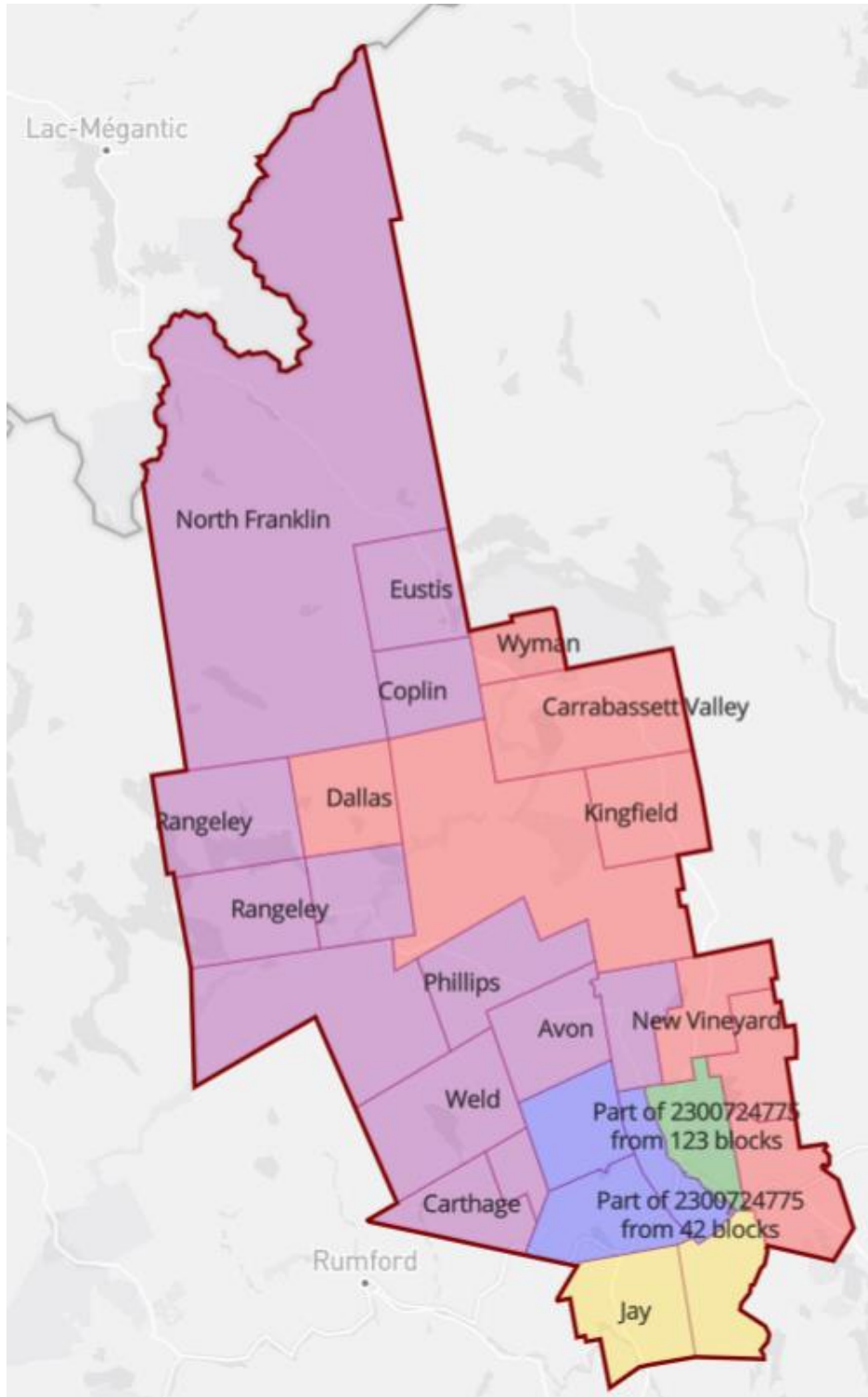


Figure 2: Farmington Boundary for Constitutional Districts

