



**HEARST**  
television

WMTW.com



To Whom it may Concern:

I am submitting this testimony in opposition of both LD983, which would make Maine exempt from Daylight Saving Time, and LD1047 which would adopt Daylight Saving Time year-round, contingent on Federal approval. Additionally, I am also against LD989, which would direct the University of Maine System to study the effects of Maine adopting Atlantic Standard Time (AST).

LD983 and LD1047 would be detrimental to local television broadcasters throughout Maine, including WMTW and WPXT, whom I represent as General Manager. The proposed legislation would harm our business efforts in Maine as well as damage our ability to serve hundreds of thousands of Mainers everyday via our over-the-air signal, cable and satellite distribution partners and over the Internet via our streaming properties. The harms to our business would also hold true if Maine moved permanently to AST. While I am not providing testimony on behalf of all broadcasters in Maine, the proposed legislation would undoubtedly impact the entire broadcast industry in Maine, which I believe should be a serious concern for the State Legislature, given broadcasters' role as "first informers", especially in times of emergencies and severe weather conditions.

WMTW, an ABC Television Network-affiliated station, and WPXT, a CW Network-affiliated station, are licensed in the Portland-Auburn designated market area (DMA), a term that is used to define television and radio markets for regulatory and advertising purposes. In fact, WMTW is the longest tenured ABC affiliate in the New England region. WMTW-TV and WPXT-TV are licensed to broadcast our signals by the Federal Communications Commission, which enables us to provide critical news, weather, community-specific information, and entertainment to our viewers. This is a role that we take seriously. Every day we strive to bring southern Maine viewers the very best in programming, and we always seek to keep Mainers informed and safe via the production of forty-one hours of weekly news. We are on-air twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, serving our viewers in good times and bad.

Here at WMTW/WPXT we go one step further. You see, as a member of our community we take great pride in assisting our friends and neighbors in addition to delivering quality programming. We are very proud that we have nearly thirty community partners who we support (daily) by bringing attention and awareness and helping to raise much needed funding. Perhaps you are familiar with the Maine Cancer Foundation for whom we have served as media sponsor for nearly sixteen years, helping them raise over \$20,000,000 dollars in their fight against Cancer. We have also partnered with the American Heart Association over the past fourteen years, helping them raise awareness and money in the fight against Heart Disease and Stroke. In addition to these larger organizations, we also help countless other community organizations, including: The Southern Maine branch of the American Red Cross (where we have helped generate over 5,000 blood donors), Strike Out Cancer in Kids, Good Sheppard Food Bank, The United Way of Androscoggin County, Literacy Volunteers, Girls on the Run, and many others. In all cases, our strength as a broad reach communication vehicle, whether over-the-air, the Internet or via

our distribution partners, enables us to support these important organizations, and ultimately, to help Mainers of all ages, gender, and ethnicity.

However, this great work would not be possible without the operational consistency and financial stability that we rely on under the current time zone standards that have been in place for over 100 years. The reality is that if Maine were to permanently move to Eastern Daylight Time (EDT) or AST it would drastically disrupt our ability to serve Mainers with the local news, weather, and general entertainment programming they have come to expect from our stations.

As a threshold matter, adopting a different time standard on an individual state basis would put Maine out of sync with its neighbors, making program scheduling chaotic, as our stations are part of national networks, which are cobbled together across 210 different markets/stations nationwide. This is especially problematic in our television market (Portland-Auburn DMA), which stretches across state lines into New Hampshire. If the proposed legislation were to be enacted, it is likely that our stations would be forced to air shows on tape delay and setting start times for live events such as sports and awards shows would become especially difficult. Further, station programming (e.g., late night programming) might comply with Federal Communications Commission (FCC) rules for the time a program is permitted to air in Maine but violate the rules in New Hampshire.

Furthermore, as an ABC affiliate, WMTW would experience network-specific operational issues. The ABC Television Network (and likely, each of the four major broadcast networks) does not have a dedicated AST feed. If Maine were to convert to AST, Maine stations would have to use ABC's "East Network Feed (based on the Eastern Time Zone), which would force network programming to air in Maine out-of-pattern and at least one hour later than intended. Informing viewers of important network programming, whether news, sports or general entertainment would also be difficult and confusing because network promos, promotions, and in-program show mentions all have time specific tags, based on the industry standard eastern time/central time references. Finally, our network procedures, formats, timings, and bookings, which also rely on the eastern time/central time zone standards, would also be disrupted and provide an inconsistent and confusing viewing experience for viewers.

From my experience, I can attest that this will also cause major confusion and disruption for viewers in Maine, not to mention inconvenience. Maine sports fans will be calling foul, as New England Patriot primetime games shift start times to 9:30pm local time or later, which means those games will not end until well after 1am. Celtics and Bruins games would begin between 9:00pm and 11:00pm local time and would likely end well into the late evening too. The viewing of other live events, like the widely watched Academy Awards Show or the American Country Music Awards, would also be negatively influenced, requiring Mainers to stay up well past midnight local time to watch the entire program.

Overall, while I imagine the elimination of Daylight Savings Time, or a move to AST, would have a detrimental impact on many industries in Maine, the legislative changes proposed would wreak havoc on local television broadcasters in our state. At WMTW/WPXT, we take our responsibility as "first informers" very seriously, but we cannot fulfill this important mission without relying on and being part of an aligned and nationwide broadcast system. That system has been in place for eighty years and has ensured that we can deliver vital news, weather, and emergency information to Mainers. I urge the legislature to reconsider the proposed legislation based on the harmful operational and economic impact it will have on our stations and the broadcast industry, in general.

Respectfully submitted,

David W. Abel  
President and General Manager

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