



TO: State and Local Government Committee

RE: LD 80 – An Act to Designate the Seppala Siberian Sleddog as the Maine State Dog

Honorable Senator Joseph Baldacci, Chair

Honorable Representative Suzanne Salisbury, Chair

Distinguished Members of the State and Local Government Committee,

My name is **Shanna Cox**, and I serve as President & CEO of the **Lewiston Auburn Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce**. We represent more than **700 businesses across Androscoggin County** and their **40,000 employees**, all of whom contribute to the region's economic vitality. I am submitting testimony in **strong support of LD 80 – An Act to Designate the Seppala Siberian Sleddog as the Maine State Dog**.

LD 80 is a bipartisan effort that honors Maine's history and cultural heritage while offering a unique opportunity to **enhance tourism and regional identity**. The Seppala Siberian Sleddog holds deep historical significance to Maine, particularly through its connection to Poland Spring, where Leonhard Seppala and his legendary lead dog, Togo, made their home after the Great Race of Mercy. Recognizing this breed as the official state dog pays tribute to Maine's longstanding ties to sled dog racing, Arctic exploration, and working dog traditions.

Additionally, **adopting a state dog aligns Maine with other New England states**, such as **New Hampshire (Chinook), Connecticut (Siberian Husky), and Massachusetts (Boston Terrier)**, each of which has selected a breed that reflects its unique history. A state dog designation will contribute to **increased tourism and economic opportunities**, as visitors will seek out Maine's sled dog history, visit sites such as the Poland Spring Museum, and engage in events that highlight our mushing heritage.

We strongly encourage the committee to support **LD 80** as a meaningful recognition of Maine's cultural heritage and a driver of economic and tourism benefits. Thank you for your consideration, and we urge you to vote **in favor of this bill**.

Sincerely,

Shanna Cox

President & CEO

Lewiston Auburn Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce



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METROPOLITAN
CHAMBER of COMMERCE

Build. Lead. Thrive.

The **Lewiston Auburn Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce** is a community-driven organization representing over **700 businesses and 40,000 employees** across Androscoggin County. The Chamber is an **engine for economic vitality and enhanced quality of life**, advocating for business interests, workforce development, and sustainable economic growth. Learn more at LAMetroChamber.com.

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