

Mayor and Council Offices

Mark Dion

Mayor

April 3, 2025



Testimony of Mayor of the City of Portland, Mark Dion

Before

The Joint Standing Committee on State and Local Government

In Opposition to

LD 1153, An Act to Align Cross Insurance Arena Board Representation with County Commissioner Districts

April 3, 2025

Senator Nangle, Representative Stover, and Members of the Committee on State and Local Government:

I write on behalf of the City of Portland to express our opposition to this legislation, LD 1153, An Act to Align Cross Insurance Arena Board Representation with County Commissioner Districts. I apologize for not being able to attend the April 2 public hearing for this bill, which proposes to restructure the board of trustees for the Cross Insurance Arena by aligning representation strictly with the county commissioner districts in Cumberland County. I ask that you consider our perspective. We are happy to participate in a work session or otherwise address any questions.

While we understand the intent to modernize representation and create consistency with the current county governance structure, the effect of this change would be to eliminate Portland's dedicated seat on the Arena Board, a change that would be both inequitable and short-sighted.

The Cross Insurance Arena is located in the heart of downtown Portland. It is a major civic, cultural, and economic asset to the city and to the entire region. Portland plays a central role in the success and operations of the arena. Portland provides the supporting infrastructure—transit access, parking, public safety services, and neighborhood coordination—that makes the venue viable. Events at the arena affect City residents, businesses, and streets. The City also contributes to the success of Cross Insurance Arena through coordinated efforts in marketing, tourism, and planning.

To remove Portland's guaranteed representation on the board would be to sever a vital line of coordination and accountability between the arena and the community most invested in its success and most directly impacted by its presence.

We are not opposed to updating board composition to reflect population changes or regional balance, but that can be done without excluding Portland altogether. The City's voice is essential on the Arena Board because of the arena's location and because of the services and support Portland consistently provides to ensure the arena operates smoothly and remains a cultural cornerstone for Southern Maine.

For these reasons, we respectfully urge the Committee to vote Ought Not to Pass on LD 1153, or to consider amending the bill to preserve direct representation for the City of Portland.

Thank you for your time and thoughtful consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Mark Dion", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Mark Dion
Mayor
City of Portland, Maine