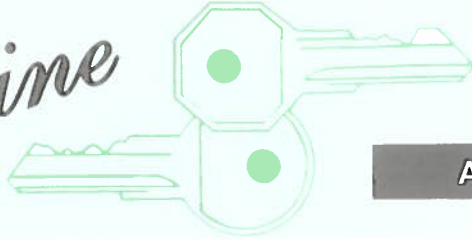


Maine



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Testimony in Opposition to LDs 284, 354, 431, 490, and 712

Good afternoon, Senator Diamond, Representative Martin, Ladies and Gentlemen of the Transportation Committee. My name is Tom Brown and I am President of the Maine Automobile Dealers Association, the statewide organization of 116 franchised new car and truck dealerships with nearly 6000 employees in all parts of Maine. Our dealerships sell and service new as well as used vehicles, with sales volume of nearly 125,000 units annually.

MADA dealerships believe that an annual inspection of motor vehicles helps ensure safe operation of the vehicle for the benefit of the vehicle operator as well as others using the roads or nearby walkways. The age of a vehicle is not as much a determining factor, since the type of driving, the miles driven, and the condition of the roads and surfaces on which people travel contribute more to the condition of a vehicle. The annual inspection program is conducted by professional technicians at repair facilities, with both the facility and the inspection technician licensed by the Maine State Police.

The safety inspection involves a review of various components and systems of a motor vehicle. While a person could easily view the windshield, headlights and taillights, windows and mirrors, other components such as brake pads and rotors, fuel and brake lines, steering mechanisms, frame, tires and tire pressure systems, exhaust and emissions systems are areas of the vehicle which are necessary to check but which are not as readily accessible and are more specialized in today's vehicles. These components and systems are disrupted by road conditions, chemicals used in Winter weather, debris in the roadway and at times the style of driving by the vehicle operator. The licensed professional technician can identify deterioration or failure in these components and systems, match their condition to the safety inspection guidelines, and inform the operator or owner of the vehicle.

Many customers rely on that annual inspection for their understanding of the vehicle's condition, and the recommended maintenance for continuing safe operation of the vehicle.

Your local licensed inspection station and their licensed safety inspection technician can provide many examples of the inspection items identified in an annual safety inspection which either failed or were close to minimum inspection standards. They are sending you their thoughts, and would be pleased to talk with you in person, on the need to maintain this safety inspection program on an annual basis.

Maine's motor vehicle safety inspection program provides a good annual review of vehicle systems necessary for the safe operation of a car or truck for the \$12.50 or \$18.50 (Cumberland County and emissions system check) state-regulated fee, and generates over \$3 million per year into the Highway Fund.

Thank you for the opportunity to present our dealerships' opposition to LDs 284, 354, 431, 490 and 712.

Tom Brown