



237 State Road, West Bath, Maine - 207-442-8881

March 18, 2021

RE: Testimony in opposition to LDs, 284, 354, 431, 490 and 712

Senator Diamond, Representative Martin and Members of the Transportation Committee,

My name is Pam Cahill, I live in Woolwich and appear today on behalf of my family's business, Bill's Garage in West Bath, Maine in opposition to the various bills before you today that would eliminate annual motor vehicle inspections or create a biennial inspection program.

Bill's Garage is a family owned small independent car repair business. We employ 4 technicians, a service manager and 2 office personnel. We stay updated with the latest technology in auto repair, laptops at all stations, a myriad of diagnostic tools, and a state-of-the-art alignment machine. We work on all makes and models, new and old. We are an authorized inspection station, including motorcycles and commercial vehicles (1-ton and 1.5 tons) and in 2020 we performed inspections on 898 vehicles.

Our reason for opposing these bills is safety. Our experience leads us to know that annual inspections help to limit the number of unsafe vehicles on our roads.

Because of the rural nature of Maine, often requiring long commutes and because of long and difficult winters creating less than perfect roads, the wear and tear on our vehicles is greater than in other areas of the country. In addition most of us in Maine are multiple car families and often at least one of those cars is an older model.

We regularly see rusted brakes and brake lines, worn out struts, leaking fuel lines, exhausts, and body rust on vehicles of all ages, not to mention the more obvious things like broken windshields, blown head and tail lights and turn signals. Any one of these impairments on a car or truck can lead to a

serious accident. The cost of an inspection at \$12.50, or \$18.50 if you live in Cumberland County, is an inexpensive way to ensure that your vehicle, or the one your kids are taking back and forth to college, is safe and in good repair.

I have heard the argument against that inspection stations look for ways to fail a car from passing inspection so they can make unnecessary repairs. My response to this claim is to find another garage. There is stiff competition among independent repair garages and it only makes good business sense to treat customers fairly. We require an appointment to do an inspection and our regular customers get first dibs on these slots. Our customers depend on us to make sure their vehicles are safe at a fair cost.

We are also opposed to a biennial inspection. While it may seem reasonable that cars less than 2 years old are in good repair, the fact is that some people may drive 10,000 miles in a year, while others may drive 25,000 to 40,000 miles each year. Newer, high mileage cars may look great, but without an inspection it would be hard to say what the underside looks like. Also, tires that pass inspection may get you through a few more months now, but could become dangerous by next winter, not to mention 2 years from now. An annual inspection, like an annual health exam, even when you think you are healthy, just makes common sense.

I urge you, as this committee has done in past years, to reject these bills.

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

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