



STATE OF MAINE
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Maine State Police
Traffic Safety Unit
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Testimony of Lt. Bruce Scott

AGAINST LD 284

**An Act to Provide That Inspections of New Motor Vehicles are Valid
for Two Years**

Senator Diamond, Representative Martin and distinguished Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Transportation, my name is Lt. Bruce Scott, and I am the Commanding Officer of the State Police Traffic Safety Unit. I am here today to testify on behalf of the Department of Public Safety and the Maine State Police Against LD 284.

LD 284 provides that a new motor vehicle's initial inspection would be valid for two years. Currently, motor vehicles registered in the State of Maine are required to be inspected by a licensed technician at least once annually.

New motor vehicles can develop serious safety related defects and catching these problems during an annual inspection may help reduce the risk of crashes thereby reducing the chances of injury or death. Additionally, an undiagnosed defect that cost \$50.00 to fix today may indeed cost hundreds if not thousands when not immediately repaired. Under this bill, emergency vehicles, some tow trucks, taxicabs, Ubers, limousines, rental vehicles, delivery service vehicles and other vehicles used in commerce but under 10,001 pounds, would not need to be inspected for two years. Some of these vehicles can accumulate 50,000 miles a year or more and are driven in the worst of conditions and at times with little to no maintenance. Meaning some vehicles will travel more than 100,000 miles without being maintained or inspected. Compounding the problem is in two years some of these vehicles will no longer be under warranty and the very intent of the bill to save Mainer's time and money will have the opposite effect. A simple cost benefit analysis should be considered here; most new vehicle dealerships offer free inspections for their customers for life and new vehicles are usually covered under warranty, so many of the defects found would be covered under warranty, at little or no cost to the owner. It would appear as though the cost is low, yet the benefit of catching dangerous defects before they affect the safety and handling of a vehicle is a very real benefit.

While discussing this bill at one of our weekly legislative meetings, Commissioner Sauschuck also pointed out a concern that I had previously overlooked regarding vehicles that are involved in crashes. Some vehicles may not get repaired properly or at all after being involved in a collision. At least we know that the vehicle will have to be brought up to minimum safety standards to pass an annual inspection.

LD 284 would also create a practical enforcement issue as the bill could create confusion in the law enforcement community. Two different types of inspection stickers would have to be issued since one sticker for new vehicles would be good for two years and another sticker for all other vehicles would be good for one year. The colors would have to be different or the stickers would have to somehow be distinguishable from one another.

There would also be a fiscal note that you may want to be aware of. The sale of inspection stickers results in approximately 3.5 million dollars in annual Highway Fund revenue. We currently pay about 15 cents per inspection sticker and sell them to new car dealers for \$3.50 each. Selling 73,000 fewer inspection stickers each year to new car dealers will result in about a \$255,000 reduction in revenue annually. In addition to this reduction in revenue you may want to consult with DEP to determine how this would affect the carbon credits that Maine receives for having an annual emissions inspection in Cumberland County, which makes our state eligible for millions of federal dollars annually. If new vehicles are no longer required to be inspected annually in Cumberland County we run the high risk of backsliding and being forced to make up these credits elsewhere or lose millions in federal funding.

I ask this committee to consider the risk versus the reward while deliberating on this and the several other inspection bills that will come before you this year. The risk in weakening the inspection laws by decreasing the frequency at which new vehicles are inspected may increase the number of defect related crashes on Maine roads resulting in property damage, injury or even death for the minimal reward of saving up to \$6.25 per year.

For these reasons, we urge you to vote Against LD 284.

On behalf of the Department of Public Safety and the Maine State Police, I thank you for your time and would be happy to try and answer any questions that you might have.