

Testimony of the Maine Municipal Association

In Opposition To

*LD 2 – An Act to Allow Military Vehicles Purchased for Civilian Use to Be Registered and Operated on
Maine Roads*

February 27, 2025

Sen. Nangle, Rep. Crafts, and distinguished members of the Transportation Committee, my name is Rebecca Graham, and I am submitting testimony in opposition to LD 2 at the direction of MMA’s Legislative Policy Committee (LPC). Our LPC is made up of individuals from across Maine with municipal officials elected by their peers across Maine’s 35 Senate districts representing communities with very different access to available enforcement resources and local capacity.

The care and maintenance of roads is the single most expensive and budget consuming obligation of municipal operations only outweighed by the combined and unchangeable mandated expenses for education and county expenses. Maine’s municipalities receive a tiny fraction —9 percent of the Department of Transportation budget for roads and bridges which equates roughly \$21 million in November of 2021. Conversely, municipalities spent a statewide estimated \$358 million in costs on the care and maintenance of roads which includes both winter maintenance and construction and repair in 2022. The costs for municipal road repair and maintenance are by far the most impacted by state policy decisions to allow vehicles of all shapes and sizes and weights to operate on the roads of Maine. Because of this, municipal officials are deeply concerned by legislative proposals that broaden the use of vehicles designed for combat purposes to be operated on the roads of Maine.

Military vehicles are not constructed under the same guidelines as domestic vehicles, usually do not meet federal safety standards of other domestic vehicles operating on the same roads, as such standards are of no use to their intended purpose for combat missions. Their weight, width and crash impact is often not comparable to the other vehicles using the same roads and likely to cause more damage to crumbling roads and edges, and further undermine municipally designated shared roadway endeavors to encourage bicycle, pedestrian and traditional horse and buggy use. Selected demilitarized vehicles are allowed only for public safety use and not for everyday operation.

For an abundance of road safety reasons, urban planning desires and potential damage to already challenged infrastructure, municipal officials ask you to vote “ought not to pass” on LD 2 and maintain the current inspection standard requirements for all vehicles operating on Maine’s roads.