



Maine Municipal
Association

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Testimony of the Maine Municipal Association

In Support of
LD 1364, *An Act Regarding Net Neutrality and Internet Policy*

April 10, 2019

Senator Lawrence, Representative Berry, members of the Energy, Utilities and Technology Committee, my name is Garrett Corbin and I am submitting this testimony in support of LD 1364 on behalf of the Maine Municipal Association at the direction of the Association's statewide Legislative Policy Committee.

This bill prevents state agencies and instrumentalities from financially supporting internet service providers who do not comply with the FCC's 2015 Open Internet Order. It is unclear whether the term "instrumentalities" is intended to include municipalities in this legislation because, ordinarily, local government is referred to in statute as a political subdivision of the state.

The municipal officials on the Association's Policy Committee wish to communicate their support for LD 1364 either way. Although MMA is ordinarily reluctant to support policies that limit local control, local leaders believe that limiting public access to the internet ought to be equally as unacceptable as curtailing home rule.

The FCC's Open Internet Order regulates internet service providers by limiting their blocking, throttling, and paid prioritization of internet traffic. These anti-discriminatory policies prevent internet service providers from leveraging their role as online gatekeepers in a way that inhibits competition.

This Committee gives great consideration to the impacts of proposals on ratepayers. The 2015 Order is in large part an inoculant against unchecked escalation of internet access rates. From the municipal perspective, the educational, economic, healthcare, and other immense variety of additional benefits that go along with protecting open access to the worldwide web outweigh the contracting limitation proposed in this bill.