



# Maine Ambulance Association

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Testimony In Support of LD 2050

## **An Act To Establish the Central Aroostook County Emergency Medical Services Authority**

Monday, February 10, 2020

Senator Deschambault, Representative Warren, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety:

My name is Jay Bradshaw, I live in Belgrade and am the Executive Director of the Maine Ambulance Association. The Maine Ambulance Association is a non-profit trade association that represents EMS services of all sizes and types.

There has been a great deal of attention lately to the challenges faced by emergency medical services. Many of you know this firsthand from your hometowns and those communities you represent. Emergency medical services is something we all accept as essential, but many are unaware of what happens behind the scenes when a call is placed to 9-1-1. In a growing number of situations how perilously close those calls come to either a significantly delayed response, or worse, no response at all.

The idea of establishing an EMS District is not new in Maine. Almost 20 years ago in response to a similar situation, the Legislature created the Washington County EMS Authority. Other communities have responded to their needs through an interlocal agreement. Examples include MedCare Ambulance that covers 11 towns in western Oxford County; and Anson Madison Starks EMS in Somerset County.

Based on conversations we have had with some of your peers and other community leaders, this is a challenge that will be rising to the surface in other parts of our state.

It is with that in mind that we offer two suggestions for LD 2050. The first is to use language that would allow other municipalities to form their own District without requiring legislation. This would also allow other municipalities in Aroostook County to participate in the district that is the focus of this bill.

The second suggestion is that such an initiative must include an objective assessment to help communities and local EMS agencies co-design EMS services that fit with local resources and capacities and that reflect community preferences. Most simply stated, the concept of “informed community self-determination” (ICSD) is designed to credibly inform taxpayers regarding the type and level of EMS they currently have, reveal flaws or limitations that exist, explain alternative levels of service and types of response to address these flaws or limitations, approximate the cost of adopting those alternatives, and facilitate a taxpayer decision to fund their current coverage or adopt a new plan.

Fortunately, there is at least one template created by a national Rural Health Committee with ICSD in mind. To be clear, there is a cost associated with such a review, but the estimate is that it would be approximately

\$15,000. Putting into perspective that an ambulance costs ~ \$200,000 and then staffing it full time is another \$600,000/year; investing \$15,000 seems entirely reasonable.

Our association exists to support Maine's EMS system, and we hope you will agree that this bill with the suggested edits will also help toward that goal.

Thank you.