



Maine Municipal
Association

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Testimony of the Maine Municipal Association

In Support Of

LD 1847 – An Act To Prohibit a Public Utility from Terminating or Disconnecting Service to a Public Safety Facility without Advance Notice and Approval
January 25, 2022

Senator Lawrence, Representative Berry and members of the Energy, Utilities and Technology Committee, my name is Neal Goldberg, and I am providing testimony in support of LD 1847 on behalf of MMA.

As word of this legislation spread among municipal officials more examples of unwarranted or unsafe termination of electric utilities were revealed. Termination of service to public safety facilities were the most alarming. No provider should be able to unreasonably end delivery of an essential utility to public safety services. This is matter of life or death.

In most instances the mistake was committed by the provider. Putting aside the surprising number of clerical errors, providers displayed no concern or compassion for the potential for risk they were creating. Past experiences have shown that providers need to proceed more diligently before terminating service, and regrettably this legislation is needed to secure the stability of our public safety facilities.

If the oversight occurs on the customer's side, public safety facilities should still be afforded the additional time and consideration that this legislation requires of utility providers. Again, these facilities are the bedrock to our communities and core to the operation of numerous essential government services. Sixty days' advance notice and state authorization prior to termination of utility are reasonable requirements of providers.

Ideally the safety net created by LD 1847 will never be tested. A normal level of customer service will resolve almost every instance of confusion. However in the absence of provider due diligence, this legislation will end the possibility that clerical or administrative errors, on the side of both customer and provider, will not create a risk to the residents of Maine.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this important matter.