



Maine Municipal
Association

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To: Maine Office of the Public Advocate
Members of the Stakeholder Group to Explore and Consider Issues regarding a Statewide
Cable Franchise

From: Kate Dufour, Director, State & Federal Relations

Date: October 22, 2020

Re: MMA Response to Stakeholder Group Discussions

To the extent a course of action emerges from these discussions, the Association urges that all recommendations considered and potentially enacted respect municipal home rule authority. A proposal to squeeze all communities into a one size fits all approach does a disservice to providers, consumers and property taxpayers. The Association strongly believes that municipalities should continue to be entrusted with the authority to work with providers to negotiate cable franchise terms that best meet the needs and desires of the entire community.

Second, initiatives that make it more difficult or costly for municipal leaders to push much needed information to residents, businesses and visitors should be avoided at all costs. Throughout the course of the COVID-19 pandemic, municipal leaders have partnered with state agencies to ensure that residents and guests have the information and educational materials necessary to remain safe and healthy.

In addition, the pandemic has shown that access to reliable broadband service is no longer a luxury, but the foundation of Maine's economic vitality. The state, as a whole, would be better served if all public and private investors worked together to fund and implement initiatives that move reliable broadband access into all areas of the state.

Finally, the Association asks that all the interested parties keep in mind the revenue shortfalls that will challenge and frustrate state and local budgets for years to come. Now is not the time to implement changes that further burden Maine's property taxpayers.

Thank you for providing the Association with this opportunity to comment.