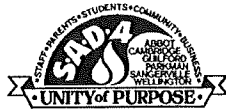


**Crystal Priest**

District Technology Director  
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**School Administrative District #4**

31 High St., Suite C  
Guilford, ME 04443

2/14/17

Re: Testimony in support of LD 256, An Act to Ensure Continued Availability of High-speed Broadband Internet at Maine's Schools and Libraries

To: Senator Woodsom, Representative Berry, and members of the Energy, Utilities and Technology Committee

As the technology director for SAD #4, a small, rural school district comprising the towns of Guilford, Abbot, Parkman, Sangerville, Wellington and Cambridge, I can safely say that the Maine School and Libraries Network (MSLN) has been the only game in any of these towns for real, high speed internet access since MSLN started in the '90s. I also am aware of the need to change MSLN's funding support from depending on fees from landlines to something that is more stable going forward. I applaud your effort at looking at a more equitable, dependable funding mechanism going forward.

MSLN is an incredibly valuable resource which allows our students and our community members to be connected in today's world. Without MSLN, many of our area residents would not have any access to decent broadband. Our towns do not have cable based internet, many residents are too far away from phone substations to access DSL, the 3 ring binder project did not connect any of the district's towns, and cell phone based data services are spotty at best. Many 3rd world countries have better access to the Internet than we do in rural Maine!

Thanks to the availability and reliability of MSLN, our school district has been able to expand 1:1 technology access beyond the 7th & 8th grade MLTI program. We have been able to concentrate on building out our internal infrastructure because we can depend on the bandwidth to allow us to take advantage of low cost cloud based solutions like Google Apps for Education as well as hosted services for our Student Information Systems and our financial systems. And that's just the bandwidth, it doesn't include other MSLN services like MARVEL with access to research databases, newspapers, magazines and encyclopedias. Without MSLN, we would be spending in the neighborhood of \$50,000.00 per year for Internet connections for our district, that's IF we could find a vendor who was willing to provide it for us! That would essentially negate all the other technology initiatives in our district.

Please help support continued connections for schools and libraries throughout the state with an up to date equitable funding mechanism.

Sincerely,

Crystal Priest  
SAD #4 Technology Director