

## Regular Meeting #2

### Maine Transportation Safety Commission Meeting

March 13, 2026; 9am-11am

45 Commerce Drive, Augusta, ME; and virtual

Chairs: Megan Welter, DOE; Bruce Scott, DPS

Participants: Megan Welter, Bruce Scott, Rob Susi, Christopher Ireland, Robert Skehan, Stephen Marquis, Wayne LaPierre, Mitzii Smith, Chris Pasciuto

Staff Support: Deb MacMaster, Jason King, Jennifer Belanger

## Agenda

Call to Order

Approval of Minutes: **Motion: Marquis; Second: Lt Scott; Vote: unanimous**

Reports of Officers and Standing Committees: N/A

Unfinished Business: N/A

New Business:

- Update on LD 2159: *An Act to Require School Buses to be Equipped with and to Use School Bus Crossing Arms*: Amendment discussion
  - Seeking recommendations for Title 29-A changes; sections 2301-2311: codify what we know to be standard practice
  - Permanent commission w/annual report-back on Feb 1
  - Violation to be a traffic violation
  - All buses to be equipped with crossing arm and drivers shall use the crossing arm any time boarding or deboarding children. Only exception is: on school property and could cause damage (ie: bus line-ups in front of a school building).
    - Discussion around changing “school property” to a “parking area” – many scenarios with field trips would necessitate the same approach
      - Parking Area: area designed for use as access or parking for patrons and customers of establishments to which the public is invited

- Training challenges for drivers to implement
- Discussion: require use while on a “public way” or during all “student stops”
  - Always require on the roads, during student stops. Allows for discretion for “harm or danger” in parking areas, closed roads
- Discussion: require use in all cases, except then physical space does not allow:
  - Shall be used in all cases with standard student stops. In other instances, shall be used at all times, except for when physical space prevents the driver from doing so. The driver shall make all attempts to use the crossing arms.
  - **Motion to accept this proposal, present to Transportation Committee: St. Pierre; Second: Pasciuto**
  - **Vote: unanimous**
- Removed requirement for retrofitting of anti-pinch sensors, want Commission to review and make recommendation
- No phase-in time as of yet; need to determine what the appropriate timeline is
  - Some Superintendents who are concerned with the retrofitting time period and ensuring compliance. Unanimous support for making the changes, just concern on timeline and cost.
  - Summer is the best time to make these changes – lower demand on bus fleets. During school year, many SAUs do not have enough buses to operate while buses are offline to be retrofitted
- Review of and recommendations to Title 29-A, Ch. 19, subchapter 4: School buses
  - Skipped for time
- Review of school bus retrofitting and anti-inch sensor technology: Andrew Wiseman, Brian Cressey, Matt Kearns
  - Andrew Wiseman: Mayser and Anti-Pinch
    - Recommendation: adopt the California Code of Regulations, Title 12 section 1267 door obstruction regulation
    - For retrofit, more limited options: alert and depower the door
    - Anti-drag is an improved version of anti-pinch technology, highly mandated in Europe, more common in US for public transit vehicles
    - Partnered with Blue Bird, building relationships with IC Bus and Thomas Built Bus

- Timeframe recommendation: mandate the technology for the beginning of the 27-28 school year
      - Provide workshop for school district mechanics to be able to install the technology themselves to expedite implementation
      - Approximately 2 hours per vehicle
    - Rough cost per bus: 550 per sensor, 225 for control unit
    - Differences between retrofit vs installed on new bus:
      - Warranty 6 months after installation
  - Brian Cressey and Matt Kearns
    - Crossing arms: retrofitting relatively easy, solutions for each vendor of bus, both electric and air power.
    - Anti-pinch is more complicated
    - Retrofitting vs. Original Equipment – more reliable and cost effective when implemented on a new build. For retrofitting, there are solutions to do this, but none are quick and none are cheap. There is no “good” time in a year to do this work. Important to have reasonable expectations.
    - Rough cost per bus
      - Anti-pinch: labor \$175/hour; \$2,500-\$4,000 per bus
      - Crossing arms: \$1,500-\$2,000 per bus, easier installation
        - Time estimate to retrofit: Jan 1, 2027 is tight but potentially doable if there are multiple vendors and districts do installation on their own
        - Doing a single source RFP would not be a great idea
    - Is there other technology that could meet our needs?
      - 360 degree cameras: readily available from numerous vendors; however, driver focusing on screen
      - Crash avoidance technology
      - Illuminated mirrors
      - Pedestrian lighting on side of bus
      - No technology can replace training, ongoing professional development, etc.
      - Interlocks for lifts and lift doors required federally, not recommended for use with main doors
    - Timeline is key
      - Crossing arms readily available and relatively easy to retrofit

- Anti-pinch sensors are still under development, production only beginning in late 2026. For retrofitting, there isn't much guidance, and certain bus types don't have the technology available yet. Beginning of 2027 school year is the earliest possible, but more likely to be 2028 when the technology is ready for implementation.
- Next steps and agenda setting
  - Original plan: next meeting focus on driver training, licensing, curriculum and training, enforcement mechanisms
    - Still need to discuss the bus specifications
    - Necessity for 5<sup>th</sup> meeting
  - Moving forward:
    - Next meeting, finish discussion of 29-A, DOE Rules, and bus specification recommendations during 1<sup>st</sup> hour. During 2<sup>nd</sup> hour, discussion of driver training and training for transportation directors.
    - Meeting on 27<sup>th</sup>, continue conversation on training.
    - Extend future meetings by an hour: 8:30a-11:30a
    - Hold calendar: Friday, April 3<sup>rd</sup> 8:30a-11:30a for possible 5<sup>th</sup> meeting

Adjournment: **Motion: St. Pierre; Second: Pasciuto; Vote: unanimous**