2 July 2018

The 128th Legislature of the State of Maine
State House
Augusta, ME

Dear Honorable Members of the 128th Legislature:

Under the authority vested in me by Article IV, Part Third, Section 2 of the Constitution of the State of Maine, I am hereby vetoing LD 1704, “An Act To Fund the Downeast Correctional Facility.”

The Downeast Correctional Facility is an antiquated and unnecessary facility. The Department of Corrections is able to house and rehabilitate minimum-security prisoners at comparable facilities that cost less to operate. My administration is the third in a row that sought to end this wasteful use of taxpayer dollars—and the first to succeed.

Although a court order obtained by unions for the prison’s employees forced the Department of Corrections to operate the prison with a skeleton crew for several months, all staff was excused from the facility earlier this month after Fiscal Year 2018 funding ran out. The prisoners housed there have been transferred or released according to their sentencing requirements. To reopen the facility now and impose this unnecessary cost—for no logical reason—is a serious dereliction of fiscal responsibility.

The time has come to accomplish a bipartisan goal shared by the last three Governors: to close this inefficient facility and turn the page. The taxpayers of Maine deserve no less.

For these reasons, I return LD 1704 unsigned and vetoed. I strongly urge the Legislature to sustain it.

Sincerely,

[Signature]
Paul R. LePage
Governor