

Chairman and Honorable Commissioners of Cumberland County:

Members of the Charter Commission are pleased to present for your consideration the Charter as proposed by the Cumberland County Charter Commission, as well as a Final Report for reference and further guidance.

The Charter offers residents of Cumberland County a number of advantageous provisions for governing, among them centralizing authority in the County Manager's office, eliminating or transforming several elected offices, improving constituent representation, and broadening the scope of services regional government now provides to participating communities.

As you know, a Charter is a template by which we organize and manage our government, a delineation of the specific powers and authorities that we invest in our elected officials and administrative offices.

The Charter Commission believes this Charter will dramatically improve the way regional government delivers both essential and non-essential services to the more than one quarter-million people in the 28 municipalities and townships of Cumberland County. Furthermore, members of the Commission believe this Charter will reduce the cost of delivering those services to the taxpayer, improve the efficiency and accountability of county government, and foster innovations in County government. And we believe that this is the best way to move county government into the twenty-first century.

And perhaps most importantly: The proposed Charter paves the way for citizens and elected officials to shape our government as we move into the future—as new demands challenge our resources and ability to respond to those demands.

As you know, the Charter Commission is a lawfully-elected and appointed panel of citizens and public officials who take an oath to improve the structure—and performance—of county government and administration. The Commission operates under the authority of MRS Title 30-A, Chapter 11. Over the last year and a half, members of the Charter Commission carefully examined the organization of local government. We called upon experts from a variety of disciplines and opinions. And we heard from members of the public, who, in many cases, directly shaped the content of this document. The Commission worked within the statutory guidelines of Maine law. And we conducted the public's business in a spirit of openness and full transparency. Members have been honored to take on this important work.

Our work is now nearing an end—and yours is just beginning. The Charter Commission, therefore, respectfully requests that you prepare this proposed Charter for public examination. We furthermore ask that you present this important document to the Secretary of State and prepare a warrant with clear and appropriate guiding language for the ballot in November 2010 so that voters have the opportunity to adopt this first-of-kind "home rule" Charter.

Claude VZ Morgan, Chairman Cumberland County Charter Commission

August 9, 2010

