



CITY OF BANGOR

Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services

Testimony in Support of LD 871 – “An Act to Provide Support for the Maine Discovery Museum’s Informal Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics Education Programs Throughout the State”

April 24, 2023

Senator Rafferty, Representative Brennan, and distinguished members of the Education and Cultural Affairs Committee. My name is Anne Krieg, Bangor’s Director of Community and Economic Development, and I’m providing testimony on behalf of the Bangor City Council in support of LD 871, “An Act to Provide Support for the Maine Discovery Museum’s Informal Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics Education Programs Throughout the State.”

Bangor is extremely fortunate to have the Maine Discovery Museum in our city. The programs they provide to people of all ages to discover the world around them through creative exploration and science are truly invaluable. Their three floors of interactive exhibits and robust science programming benefit Bangor residents and visitors alike. In fact, 60,000 people visit the Maine Discovery Museum each year, and another 15,000 people take advantage of the museum’s outreach programming. Their programs and mission align with the City’s recently completed Economic Development Strategy which highlights our citizens’ belief that we have the potential to become an educational hub. Our proximity to two major universities, the quality of the Bangor School Department, and our location position us to become a region known for world-leading scientists accomplishing groundbreaking work. This will help Bangor and the State as it seeks to target young professionals to help enhance both a vibrant and diverse culture.

The Maine Discovery Museum is a tremendous asset not only to Bangor, but to the State of Maine as a whole. It is a hub of informal STEM education and reaches rural and underserved communities throughout the year. It provides rich science content that many children and adults cannot get anywhere else and, for some, it is the only exposure they receive.

LD 871 will provide state funding to support two Maine Discovery Museum programs that are available to Mainers free of charge. The first is the Maine Invention Convention, a statewide competition for middle school students that is part of the national network of invention conventions run by the Henry Ford Museum in Michigan. This program provides students with the opportunity to explore, design, and invent creative solutions to problems in their own world. Past Maine students have competed on the national level and have done very well, returning to their communities with a sense of accomplishment and the underpinnings of a career in Maine’s innovation economy.

The second program LD 871 will support is the Maine Science Festival, the museum’s largest program and the only science festival north of Cambridge, MA. This exciting event is a celebration and exploration of

Maine science by the people who do it. The festival is held in March of each year and has served more than 65,000 people since its inception in 2015.

Our business community has noted the disconnect between the types of jobs available and the types of jobs people are seeking, and a strengthened Maine Discovery Museum can begin to bridge this disconnect. This proposed funding would be transformative not only to the Maine Discovery Museum but to Maine public science education and the Maine economy. For this reason, and with the full support of the Bangor City Council, I urge you to pass LD 871 as a means to bolster informal science, technology, engineering, and mathematics education programs throughout the state.

Thank you for your consideration. Please do not hesitate to reach out with questions.

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