



CONNECTING PEOPLE
& STRATEGIES TO DRIVE
MAINE'S ECONOMY

Testimony to the Joint Standing Committees on Appropriations & Financial Affairs
and on Innovation, Development, Economic Advancement & Business
Neither For Nor Against L.D. 2214, "The Supplemental Budget"
February 22, 2024

Senator Rotundo, Representative Sachs, Senator Curry, Representative Roberts, and Honorable Members of the Committees:

The Maine Development Foundation offers written testimony, via our CEO Yellow Light Breen of Holden, Maine, *Neither For Nor Against LD 2214, "The Supplemental Budget."*

MDF is not taking a position on any specific provision included in the Executive's proposed Supplemental.

We write to request that the Committees ADD the restoration of State General Fund support for MDF in the amount of \$250,000 per annum or \$500,000 for the biennium.

Essentially, we ask that LD 262, as recently amended and unanimously supported in the IDEAB Committee, be folded into the Budget bill itself. This could be framed as a one-time catch-up provision and an ongoing \$250,000.

In the interest of brevity and consistency, I am attaching a few key pieces of testimony on LD 262 here for the consideration of the Committees. Below are excerpts of a few key passages of my own testimony.

MDF is a unique statewide non-profit, non-partisan public-private partnership established by the Legislature and the Governor in 1977 to work across the business, government, and education sectors to provide an objective, respected, long-range vision and strategies for growing Maine's economy. We do this through our trusted economic research, leadership programs, and several signature public-private partnerships.

The Committees are hopefully familiar with some of our most valuable programming: the nonpartisan Measures of Growth annual scorecard on the Maine economy; our respected leadership development programs including the Policy Leaders Academy "bus tours" for the Legislature; and our cross-sector partnerships such as the Maine Downtown Center, Forest Opportunity Roadmap for Maine (FOR/Maine), SEAMaine, and our core partnership in MaineSpark particularly focused on adult learners and incumbent workers upskilling with credentials of value.

LD 262 as amended by the IDEAB Committee would restore the matching appropriation of \$250,000 per annum to incent and amplify the like same amount of private sector donations to MDF. It also has some language regarding slightly longer Board term limits for improved governance.

This provision honors the spirit of funding intent in 1977 and a commitment kept by the State for nearly 15 years until 1991. See founding language and legislative history of appropriations attached. Currently, MDF receives NO general operating support from the General Fund, and only small portions of dedicated funding for specific purposes and projects (including a contract for Measures of Growth) but the grand total is less than \$150,000 or less than 5% of MDF's budget and does not support the general mission or leverage private sector match as intended in 1977. In other words, MDF leverages modest state GF support today by 20-to-1!

What Additional Impact Can MDF Have with Additional Investment?

Why not simply continue with MDF's disproportionate but often successful reliance on competitive, episodic project grants from private and federal sources?

Several important reasons: Grants typically require match and are on a discontinuous timeline. They often cannot be renewed. Many funders want to fund the startup phase but not the ongoing work. Most grants cannot be used to fund the grant-writing efforts for pursuit of complementary funds. Thus, matching funds, leverage funds, and continuity/bridge funding is vital to persistent meaningful impact in MDF projects and programs.

With general program support, MDF can impact growth initiatives in critical industries, in distressed and redeveloping communities all around the state, and the associated workforce needs. And we can catalyze future high-leverage projects with similar impact to the work of today. Below are a few key **examples**.

Match Funding for the Next Phase of Sector-Based Development Work – FOR/Maine & SEAMaine

FOR (Forest Opportunity Roadmap): MDF and partners do seek to persist in the efforts by submitting competitive grant proposals, with a focus on (1) workforce development & recruiting; (2) investment attraction in bioproducts; (3) support for mill town recovery, including the immediate distress and comeback strategy for the Jay area. *Current funding is limited and fragmentary (DECD provided some critical bridge funding in 2023).*

SEA (Seafood Economic Accelerator): SEAMaine completes its roadmap for future opportunities in marine living economy (wild and cultivated) this winter; and is seeking federal and other implementation funding for 2024 and beyond. *There is no interim or matching funding currently provided to bridge into effective implementation.*

With General Fund matching investment, such efforts can be more vigorous, persistent, and more impactful. Without this additional funding request, these projects are much more likely to be curtailed in scope and impact.

Catalytic & Match Funding for Maine Downtown Center

The Maine Downtown Center is a highly successful program mandated in state statute since 1999 and located at MDF. Additional funding would continue to generate and match opportunities such as:

- More capacity for smaller and more rural communities – existing and new – to redevelop.
 - Current examples where the MDC has engaged with and would like to assist more in depth:
FOR/Maine communities Ashland, Millinocket, E. Millinocket, Lincoln, Bucksport, Old Town, Jay;
additional communities Berwick, S. Berwick, Sanford, Pittsfield, Van Buren, Farmington
- Entrepreneurship efforts such as the one piloted in 3 towns with private funding and expanded in 10 towns this year with congressional earmark funds.
- Recovery and resiliency efforts in response to floods and other climate disasters.

Although the Center has ramped up its efforts to meet more needs – serving 88 Maine communities in 2023, it cannot sustain this level of effort without additional public match.

Catalytic & Match Funding for Workforce & Education Initiatives

A critical program area that is currently under-funded and requires stable core funding to continue to attract outside match, is MDF's work in workforce development and educational attainment. This includes Maine Adult Promise, which brings together the educational institutions and hundreds of community-based providers and Navigators who support adult learners and incumbent workers in pathways back to education and training and the supports needed to persist and succeed with degrees and other credentials of value.

<https://mainespark.me/adult-promise/> This Navigator Network is a crucial asset to many workforce and

educational initiatives – but is very difficult to sustain solely through episodic grant funding. *Without requested funding to complement private philanthropy, this valuable program may be significantly limited.*

I stand ready to answer questions from the Committees at any time for the work sessions.

Respectfully submitted, Yellow Light Breen, President & CEO, yellow@mdf.org
Maine Development Foundation, 2 Beech Street, Suite 203, Hallowell, ME 04347

Attachments: Funding History; MDF Program list; Downtown Map;

Select Testimony on LD 262:

- Representative Roberts
- MDF Champions Circle Members & Investors (seven organizational signatories)
- EJ Roach, Old Town
- Cianbro
- Maine Forest Products Council



Current as of January 2024

Attachment A: Maine Development Foundation

REVENUE	1996	1995	1994	1993	1992	1991	1990	1989	1988	1987
Memberships	290,017	240,234	172,459	173,800	177,246	197,455	259,171	247,314	254,826	230,473
State Appropriation	0	0	0	43,221	150,730	166,463	259,170	247,314	254,826	230,473
Contracts	264,553	343,611	260,898	29,522	126,582	105,107	136,763	264,804	363,748	456,136
Grants	117,412	226,093	80,293	48,762	209,467	82,820	50,000	0	0	0
Fees	255,901	182,911	121,678	65,072	37,200	45,866	0	0	0	0
Aspirations/Ed.	0	0	360,079	357,523	230,000	224,950	312,141	370,113	18,021	0
Other	51,831	103,155	57,308	28,070	17,816	15,382	16,533	15,535	10,738	0
Total Revenue	979,714	1,096,004	1,052,715	745,970	949,041	838,043	1,033,778	1,145,080	902,159	917,082
EXPENSES										
Salaries/FB	607,483	544,115	561,308	519,974	431,012	426,063	407,842	394,830	354,826	397,307
Consultants	113,068	152,508	143,900	51,565	207,529	159,197	75,479	82,382	78,601	245,910
Program Costs	247,079	272,170	162,464	77,826	197,927	119,645	367,259	547,313	211,625	140,583
Other Expenses	175,526	167,040	164,942	109,629	130,528	124,425	128,710	128,452	236,851	126,144
Total Expenses	1,143,156	1,135,833	1,032,614	758,994	966,996	829,330	979,290	1,152,977	881,903	909,944

Notes

1. Information is for calendar year; taken from audited statements.
2. Administrative costs average 15-18%, well below the standard for this size organization.
3. Audits are not prepared by program category but by function.
4. Program costs are direct "out of pocket" expenses, and exclude personnel and consultant expenses, most of which are program-related.

From: [Reference_Lawlib](#)
To: [Yellow Breen](#)
Subject: Reference request
Date: Tuesday, January 24, 2023 4:35:19 PM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)

Yellow,

Thank you for contacting the Law and Legislative Reference Library, a non-partisan office of the Maine Legislature.

Unallocated language in [PL 1977, ch. 548](#) appears to answer your question:

Sec. 3. Appropriation.

There is appropriated from the General Fund the sum of \$250,000 for the fiscal years 1977-78 and 1978-79 to assist the foundation in its efforts to foster, support and assist economic growth and revitalization in the State. It is provided, however, that no amount of the appropriation shall be provided to the foundation unless the foundation can demonstrate a matching and equal fiscal support from its private and public corporators and members described in Title 10, chapter 107.

If you have further questions please feel free to contact us again.

Ryan Jones

Reference Librarian

Maine State Law and Legislative Reference Library

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website: <http://www.legislature.maine.gov/lawlib>

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Tiffany Roberts

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Tiffany.Roberts@legislature.maine.gov

January 16, 2024

Testimony of Rep. Tiffany Roberts presenting

LD 262, An Act to Strengthen Maine's Workforce

Before the Joint Standing Committee on Innovation, Development, Economic Advancement and Business

Good afternoon, Senator Curry and esteemed colleagues on the Innovation, Development, Economic Advancement and Business Committee. My name is Tiffany Roberts, and I represent House District 149 and the communities of North Berwick and South Berwick. I am here before you today to present *LD 262, An Act to Strengthen Maine's Workforce*.

The purpose of this legislation is to amplify the impact of a vital public-private partnership – the Maine Development Foundation (MDF). MDF plays a pivotal role in addressing Maine's workforce challenges and contributes significantly to economic and community development.

This bill has three separate goals:

- Extending The Term Limits of the Board
- Facilitating Collaboration with the state
- **Appropriating State Funding**

Our committee has witnessed the significant contributions of MDF to our communities and state through programs such as the "Policy Leaders Academy," "Measures of Growth" report, and the Maine Downtown Center. MDF has been a leader in enhancing the skills and education credentials of Maine's workforce, contributing to initiatives like MaineSpark and "Maine Adult Promise."

MDF's efforts with initiatives like the Forest Opportunity Roadmap and the SEAMaine address innovative pathways to prosperity. Importantly, MDF's statewide reach is invaluable to smaller service centers and rural regions, providing access to expertise and programming.

Established in 1977, this public-private partnership requires our support to ensure its continued robustness and broader community impact.

First, MDF currently has, in statute, Board limits of 5 years. MDF Board members have been consistently seeking additional terms to serve longer. This is a complex agency with a variety of programs, and the sentiment from past and present Board members is they feel they could have a much more strategic impact with more time on the Board while continuing to refresh the membership regularly with the proposed 8-year limits.

The second element in the bill seeks to strengthen and make even easier the collaboration between MDF and other state agencies. This provision allows and encourages relevant mutually beneficial work to be sourced to MDF but does not require it. It is inspired by the fact that the UMaine System and the State have had a master agreement in place since 1989 to enable appropriate sole sourcing. Since the drafting of the amendment, there have been subsequent conversations with DAFS, so we may need to address this policy initiative.

The third element of the bill is particularly important to appropriate General Fund support of \$250,000 per year to MDF to expand and sustain the impact of its invaluable programming and fulfill the pledge that the legislature made in 1977 and kept until 1991. I believe that we have bipartisan agreement on the value that MDF provides and see the potentially significant impact that would be available with this funding. Although one legislature cannot bind another, let us stay true to the original commitment.

Defining this funding as *general program support* enables it to go where it is most needed to match other funding, bridge other funding, and ensure that efforts can be persistent and powerful in reaching more communities and meeting the needs of workforce development and economic growth.

Currently, MDF receives a small amount of General Fund support each year of just over \$58,000, which is earmarked for specific initiatives. They also are a contractor to DECD for the Growth Council for about \$90,000 per year. This is out of their budget of over \$3 million, where less than 5% comes from the state.

I'm asking the committee to keep the legislature's pledge from 1977. And let's help ensure critical work doesn't wither on the vine when short-term outside grants come and go.

The needs, opportunities, and potential impact of MDF as a public-private partnership are greater than ever. MDF has been doing phenomenal work on our behalf for 45 years. They have leveraged their independence and private sector relationships and entrepreneurial grant-writing for this important public mission, even absent our original pledge. Imagine what could be done if that was restored.

In conclusion, this legislation will enhance MDF's organizational effectiveness, strengthen its collaboration with state partners, and increase its critical impact on our workforce, economy, and communities.

Thank you for your attention, and I am happy to answer any questions.



Honorable Chairs & Members of the IDEAB Committee:

We write to urge you to support L.D. 262 and restore the State of Maine's pledged but long-neglected \$250,000 annual matching investment in the invaluable work of the Maine Development Foundation.

As private sector Champions Circle members of MDF and investors in MDF's work, our undersigned organizations alone have collectively contributed more than \$500,000 in just the past five years to MDF's mission and impact. And, overall, private companies and philanthropies are investing well over \$500,000 per year in MDF's mission and impact.

Our investment in the mission, and entrusting MDF to educate our own future leaders about the Maine economy, should speak louder than any other endorsement we can make.

It is time for the State to make good on restoring its \$250,000 matching commitment to MDF's private sector funding. MDF's proven track record shows the return on this investment will be substantial.

MDF is unique. Chartered by the State but deliberately made independent and entrepreneurial. Innovative and responsive. Building a place where the public and private sector come together around trusted economic data; leadership immersion in the true realities and reasons to believe in the Maine economy; and in partnership around transformational opportunities for communities and sectors.

We continue to be impressed by the array of programming MDF has been able to catalyze to meet the moment in Maine's economy. Just by example:

FOR/Maine – where MDF's unique ability to help bring industry, community, and educational and research assets to the same table and stay at the table to reshape future growth, has helped ravaged communities stabilize and start rebuilding, and helped the forest products sector attract more than \$1 billion in new capital investment. *This effort must be sustained for the long haul and other sectors need this type of coordinated effort.*

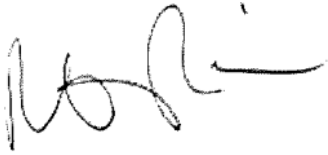
Maine Downtown Center – where MDF is working with dozens of communities to reuse historic buildings, attract and retain small businesses, residents, and jobs – with an investment multiplier of more than 20:1, turning \$25,000 from the State General Fund into more than \$1 million in community support this year alone. *Many more communities in our state need the expertise of MDF/MDC to grow local entrepreneurship and prosperity.*

Maine Adult Promise and MaineSpark – where MDF is helping dozens of collaborating organizations and hundreds of navigators who assist adult learners in pursuit of credentials and upskilling, to build better, more effective systems to reach thousands more workers. *Workforce is the key challenge of our time, and MDF has the credibility and track record to understand, bridge, and align industry needs with public sector programming.*

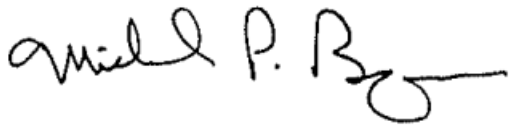
From Kittery to Madawaska and Rumford to Eastport, MDF's unique capabilities to forge workforce, community, and economic development partnerships that get pivotal work done are needed more than ever to move Maine forward, and should be invested in.

MDF's impact can be even greater with adequate partnership from the State of Maine living up to its commitment as co-founder of MDF. In 1977 the State challenged the private sector to rise to the occasion. We did, and we have. The State took a step back after 1990. We urge you to step forward to reinvest in your creation again to help even more Maine workers, businesses, and communities prosper.

Join us by restoring the State of Maine's full \$250,000 annual funding commitment now.



Bob Montgomery-Rice, President & CEO, Bangor Savings Bank




Mike Bourque, CEO, MEMIC



S. Catherine "Katy" Longley, EVP & COO, The Jackson Laboratory



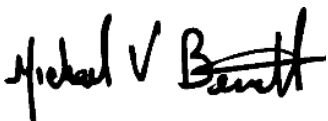
James Herbert, President, University of New England



Deborah Ellwood, President & CEO, Maine Community Foundation



Matthew McHatten, President & CEO, MMG Insurance Group



Michael Bennett, Vice President, Cianbro

JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON INNOVATION, DEVELOPMENT, ECONOMIC ADVANCEMENT
AND BUSINESS

Sen. Chip Curry, Senate Chair
Rep. Tiffany Roberts, House Chair

PUBLIC HEARING: Tuesday, January 16, 2024, 1:00 PM, Cross Building, Room 206

(L.D. 262) Bill "An Act to Strengthen Maine's Workforce" (HP0167) (Presented by Representative
ROBERTS, T. of South Berwick)

My name is EJ Roach and I am the Director of Economic & Community Development for the City of Old Town. I also live in Old Town, along with 7,500 other folks. These 7,500 residents may not be aware of the Maine Development Foundation, they may not have heard about the Forest Opportunity Road Map, or the Maine Downtown Center or even the Institute for Civic Leadership. However, these programs and resources offered by MDF have directly impacted the community where they live, and work more than they realize. Located on the banks of the Penobscot river, Old Town has held a close relationship with its surrounding waters, and has a rich history of log drives, water powered sawmills, canoe building, and pulp and paper manufacturing. If you live in a community with a pulp & paper mill you deal with uncertainty. That uncertainty has been eased though our ongoing relationship and support from the Maine Development Foundation.

Forest Opportunity Roadmap (FOR Maine)

- MDF successfully applied for and brought the Forest Opportunity Road Map to 10 communities statewide who were suffering from economic disaster.
- In 2015, Old Town, like other mill communities, suffered from lost jobs, unstable unemployment, foreclosures, loss of tax base, and a brief loss of community pride.
- FOR Maine provided an assessment of needs for Old Town and helped us identify resources for our community to move forward.
 - MDF facilitated a housing study which has allowed us to understand our existing housing stock and how best to increase a variety of housing options to help meet the current and future demand.
 - MDF also helped us focus on our downtown as an asset to potential mill site redevelopment, attracting work force, etc. We were one of 5

communities who opted in to focus on their downtown. We believe every community should get this opportunity.

- Even though the mill reopened in 2018 we continued to work closely with FOR ME knowing that at any given point we might find ourselves back in the same situation. In spring of 2023, we found ourselves in an extended shutdown. Our work and time with MDF has helped us to keep moving forward.

Downtown Revitalization

- MDF's Maine Downtown Center staff visited Old Town initially as part of the FOR ME program to meet with municipal staff and elected officials to discuss what a formal downtown revitalization program looked like and to put eyes on our downtown and see it first-hand.
- We received a small mini grant to complete a downtown project so the community would start thinking more about downtown and how small incremental steps can make an impact.
- We also received consulting services for a community engagement process called the Downtown Revitalization Roadmap process which gave the community a path forward and priorities for our downtown revitalization efforts.
- The Maine Downtown Center Staff has spent a great deal of time working with staff and a local committee on developing this initiative.
- When the FOR Maine effort wrapped up the Maine Downtown Center continued to support Old Town by regularly attending meetings and assisting with the launch of this effort. They provided best practices from other communities around Maine and nationally so that we did not have to reinvent the wheel.
- The Downtown Old Town Committee has launched, the community is engaged and supportive, and we are anxiously awaiting final approval of our application to be designated as a Maine Downtown Affiliate which will make us the 15th Downtown Affiliate in Maine.
- Old Town has been talking about developing our downtown for decades. We had the passion and vision, but we were missing something. What we were missing was a framework to focus our initiatives and a friend to help show us the way. A framework that focuses on Economic Vitality, Design,

Organization, and Promotion. The Main Downtown Center has brought this Maine Street America approach to Old Town and has been that friend to help us get there.

Leadership Training

- I am a current member of the Institute for Civic Leadership Class at MDF. I eagerly became a participant after two staff members, our Assistant City Manager and our Finance Director participated. As our assistant director has said often, ICL is better than sliced bread! How could I not pass up the opportunity.
- The experience has been transformative to say the least. I have learned to not only be a better leader for Old Town, but it has also made me a better person.
- Although I am the one participating in this program, my 7,500 neighbors in Old Town are indirectly benefiting from my experience.

In conclusion, I value MDF personally and professionally and I am hopeful that the resources and support that we have received in Old Town could be available to every community in Maine. MDF is helping us rebuild pride in Old Town as a place we all want to live and work and spend time. MDF has brought us capacity and confidence when we needed it and I urge you to support LD 262 to allow other communities to benefit from their work and their expertise.

Sincerely yours,

EJ Roach



Maine Forest Products Council

The voice of Maine's forest economy

Testimony in Support to LD 262

“An Act to Strengthen Maine’s Workforce”

Tuesday, January 16, 2024

Patrick Strauch, Executive Director

Companies represented on the MFPC Board

A & A Brochu Logging
American Forest Mgmt.
Baskahegan Co.
BBC Land, LLC
Columbia Forest Prod.
Cross Insurance
Family Forestry
Farm Credit East
Fontaine Inc.
H.C. Haynes
Huber Resources
INRS
J.D. Irving
Katahdin Forest Mgmt.
Key Bank
Kennebec Lumber
LandVest Inc.
Louisiana Pacific
Maibec Logging
ND Paper
Nicols Brothers
Pingree Associates
Prentiss & Carlisle
ReEnergy
Richard Wing & Son
Robbins Lumber
Sappi North America
Southern Maine Forestry
Stead Timberlands
St. Croix Tissue
St. Croix Chipping
TD Bank
Timber Resource Group
Timberstate G.
Wadsworth Woodlands
Wagner Forest Mgt.
Weyerhaeuser
Woodland Pulp

Good afternoon, Senator Curry, Representative Roberts and members of the Committee on Innovation, Development, Economic Advancement and Business. I’m Patrick Strauch of Exeter, Maine. I’m here testifying today as the Executive Director of the Maine Forest Products Council. The Council doesn’t come before this committee often, so let me take this opportunity to tell you a little bit about us. The Maine Forest Products Council is an organization representing more than 300 members from all facets of the forest products industry from the stump to the mill. Our members include paper mills, sawmills, secondary wood processors and large landowners. Our membership also includes banks and insurance companies. We represent anyone with an interest in promoting a robust and healthy forest products industry.

I am here today to testify in support of LD 262, “An Act to Strengthen Maine’s Workforce” as amended by the sponsor, Representative Roberts.

For the last seven years, the Maine Forest Products Council has worked collaboratively with the Maine Development Foundation on a unique cross-sector collaboration called the Forest Opportunity Roadmap, also known as FOR/Maine. This project brings together industry, communities, government, institutions of higher education and non-profits to help Maine strategically adapt and capitalize on changing markets to maintain our leading role in the global forest economy.

Since its inception seven years ago, the Council has helped lead this effort, which is staffed by the Maine Development Foundation. This ongoing effort has been tremendously successful, and that is in part thanks to the good, credible, non-partisan work of the Maine Development Foundation. The Maine Development Foundation has been a great organization to partner with.

LD 262, as amended, restores match funding from the central fund for private contributions to MDF, up to \$250,000 per year, to support their work in the areas of economic, workforce and community development initiatives with a focus on distressed communities and industries. These funds, which would help MDF leverage up to \$500,000 per year, would allow the organization to continue its great work, which of a great benefit to our economy and state.

For these reasons, please vote **‘Ought to pass’** on LD 262 as amended. I would be happy to answer any questions that you may have.

01/16/2024

Senator Curry, Representative Roberts and respective members of the Joint Standing Committee on Innovation, Development, Economic Advancement and Business, my name is Dan Coffey, I am a resident of Hampden and am the Director of Operational Human Resources at Cianbro. I am here today to provide testimony in support of LD-262, An Act to Strengthen Maine's Workforce

Cianbro is a 100% employee-owned construction and construction services firm headquartered in Pittsfield, Maine, routinely operating in over 40 States and employing over 4,000 team members; over 800 of which are Maine residents.

Cianbro has been a member and supporter from the inception of the Maine Development Foundation. We believe preparing leadership for the future is critical for both our company and the future of the Maine economy.

We are told, we are one of the top 3 consistent business supporters of the Leadership Maine Program. Why do we continue to support MDF? We view MDF's credibility to be grounded in being objective and nonpartisan, which is rare and important in shaping our state's economic strategies.

Cianbro was a central partner in the "Maine Employers Initiative" which is now Maine Adult Promise — getting adult learners into the right programs and pathways and supporting them to completion. For decades we have partnered on education and workforce development — importantly, with a strong focus on incumbent workers and nontraditional/adult learners and have a shared appreciation for the importance and value of providing multiple educational pathways both non-degree credentials in addition to degrees as does MDF.

We, like everyone in this room share a passionate commitment to the future of Maine's economy and the future of rural Maine. Pivotal work by MDF in assisting the forest products industry and affected communities like Millinocket in their vision and execution of a future opportunity and comeback strategy is inspiring and necessary for our future.

We had the privilege to work on TimberHP in Madison and for those at the opening ceremony we heard from the then-Town Manager Tim Curtis how pivotal MDF's support was in helping the community find a path forward for the mill site and begin readying it for reuse.

What makes MDF a uniquely valuable partner and a uniquely valuable investment for the State of Maine?

1. MDF works from objective data.
2. They work closely with private sector business leaders.
3. They seek to truly understand the needs for capital investment and workforce that drives the economy.

4. MDF has credibility which provides them the ability to work meaningfully and effectively bridging government, education, community, and business to drive to impactful solutions to a degree that almost no other government or quasi-governmental agency has.
5. MDF is nimble. When 5 paper mills closed, MDF assisted industry, community, and university leaders to chart a collaborative Roadmap in just a few months' time.

Thus, the State's investment in MDF has received and will continue to get unique leverage and impact.

It is critical that this investment be a shared load with the State given the huge public benefits and the need for persistence and scale to reach more communities, employers, and sectors.

We understand much of MDF's work is funded by time-limited, episodic federal grants. We can do better.

We have something very special here in Maine and the opportunities in front of us will be best leveraged if we properly fund the Maine Development Foundation.

For the State of Maine to be at its best, MDF must have public and private support so it may take on the big challenges and opportunities from Kittery to Madawaska and Rumford to Eastport.

Now, more than ever, our State must renew its partnership with the Maine Development Foundation to allow for the joint success we have experienced to perpetuate Maine's economic prosperity in the coming years.