

Senator Grohoski, Representative Perry and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Taxation. My name is Maggie Meredith. I am a former resident of Portland, but now live in Boyertown, Pennsylvania. I am the Vice President of People, Culture, and Brand for Seakeaper, a company that manufactures products that make boating more enjoyable. Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony in support of LD 2258.

In the winter of 2006 - 2007 I had recently graduated from college and had taken an internship at the Portland Sea Dogs. It was a long way from my home in Kansas, but the internship was one of the best opportunities in baseball so I couldn't pass it up. I loaded up my Chevy Blazer with my dog Rawling, rented a little apartment on Spring street, and began pursuing my dream of working in baseball.

I spent the next nine months learning everything I could from the best in the business. I met great friends, created wonderful memories, and set a foundation for my career. The Portland Sea Dogs taught me how to be effective in communications and marketing. My experience in Portland led me to further minor league opportunities in State College, PA and Quad City, IA. Without the instruction and valuable first hand experience I had in Portland my career would definitely have taken a different route.

When I learned that the Sea Dogs' franchise could be in danger I wanted to lend my voice to the team for support. The franchise is a gem of minor league baseball and, as I learned first hand, an economic and community driver in Portland. I have no doubt the city and state would suffer both economically and socially if the club were to leave. The team has raised and donated millions of dollars to incredible causes all around Maine. One that specifically comes to mind is the Maine Childrens Cancer program. I had the opportunity to witness the value and meaning of this program when I was in Portland. Without the Sea Dogs, there will be fewer smiles and resources for families who are enduring the unthinkable.

As someone who manages a brand for a living there is also tremendous value to the Portland Sea Dogs brand. They are one of the most popular brands in all of minor league sports. Slugger has recently been inducted into the Mascot Hall of Fame. It would be a tragic loss to have the Sea Dogs brand, in either teal or red, fade from the baseball landscape. In my opinion, it would be the loss of an iconic Maine brand.

While I don't pretend to be an expert on public policy, I do know that there is value in every tax dollar. The Portland Sea Dogs have contributed greatly not only to Portland and Southern Maine, but to the State and Minor League Baseball as a whole. I think this tax credit would be a great investment into a responsible corporate partner, reliable charitable champion, and iconic Maine brand. I hope that you will vote ought to pass on this legislation.