



3-4-2025

Dear Senator Chip Curry, Senate Chair and Representative Traci Gere, House Chair, Committee on Housing and Economic Development and Representative Tiffany Roberts,

I am writing to express my strong support for LD 629 and to urge you to restore funding for the Maine Development Foundation (MDF). As Executive Director of Saco Main Street, I have personally experienced the invaluable impact of MDF's programs, particularly through the Maine Downtown Center (MDC). Their expertise and support have been instrumental in strengthening our downtown, driving economic development, and fostering vibrant communities across the state.

When the Maine Legislature established MDF over 40 years ago, it recognized the importance of investing in statewide economic and community development. However, over time, state funding for MDF disappeared, despite the organization continuing to provide critical services. LD 629 seeks to restore this funding—adjusted for inflation to \$500,000—ensuring that MDF can continue its vital work supporting Maine communities.

The impact of MDF's work is undeniable. Through MDC, they serve as the only statewide resource dedicated to downtown revitalization, filling a gap in expertise that no other organization in Maine provides. The demand for their services continues to grow, and their individualized approach leads to proven success. For every \$1 invested in one of Maine's 11 Main Street communities, there is a remarkable \$23 return—demonstrating the power of strategic, local investment.

I have seen firsthand how MDC's support leads to tangible results. Through their initiatives, we successfully secured an Entrepreneur Ecosystem grant that not only benefited the businesses in our downtown but also provided the opportunity to build a stronger relationship with our neighboring Main Street, Heart of Biddeford. MDC's annual accreditation visits also help communities like ours stay on track and continuously improve our impact.

I strongly encourage you to support LD 629 and restore the funding that was always intended to support MDF's work. This investment will ensure Maine's downtowns and communities continue to thrive for generations to come.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I appreciate your leadership and commitment to strengthening Maine's communities.

Sincerely,

Angie Presby

Executive Director, Saco Main Street