

Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs
Testimony of Kate Dickerson, Maine Discovery Museum

In Support of
LD 506, An Act to Authorize a General Fund Bond Issue for Research and Development and Commercialization

April 9, 2025

Senator Rotundo, Representative Gattine, and esteemed members of the Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs. My name is Kate Dickerson, and I'm the Executive Director of the Maine Discovery Museum as well a member of the Maine Innovation Economy Advisory Board. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of LD 506, An Act to Authorize a General Fund Bond Issue for Research and Development and Commercialization.

Maine Discovery Museum's (MDM) mission is to help people of all ages to discover the world around them through creative exploration and science. A key feature of how MDM does this is to focus on the science and people in Maine, given that there is an abundance of national and world leading work happening in Maine. And even though Maine researchers are known throughout the world, the amount of state financial support for research and development (R&D) is not enough to ensure a robust R&D environment.

I'm sure you've heard the statistics that Maine invests about 1.1% of its gross state product in R&D¹ and that every \$1 of public R&D investment typically produces \$2 to \$5 in long-term economic growth.² R&D funding is about more than just money, though. R&D provides new knowledge, a better understanding of our world, and continuing inspiration to researchers, citizens, and students. As an organization who brings Maine science to the public, we see every day how new ideas (built on the foundation of what was cutting-edge R&D) impact Mainers for the better.

LD 506 is a critical step to helping Maine close the R&D gap and to help foster new careers and knowledge, and to continue to diversify our economy. I am asking you to join me in enthusiastically supporting LD 506, and to give Maine voters another opportunity to overwhelmingly support science in Maine.

Sincerely,



Kate Dickerson
Executive Director
Maine Discovery Museum
Founder, Maine Science Festival

¹ This is compared to the national average of 3.6% and 5.7% by other New England states. Source: Maine Economic Improvement Fund Report, 2024

² National Bureau of Economic Research