



132nd MAINE LEGISLATURE THE JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE
HOUSING and ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Re: Testimony in Opposition to LD 1664 – An Act to Repeal the Dirigo
Incentive Program

Senator Curry, Representative Gere, and distinguished members of the Committee on Housing and Economic Development, my name is Peter DelGreco, President & CEO of Maine & Co., an organization dedicated to attracting business investment and job creation to the state. I am submitting this testimony in **strong opposition to LD 1664**, which would repeal the **Dirigo Business Incentives Program**—a critical component of Maine’s modern economic toolkit and a program I previously supported during its development.

A Program Built with Purpose

The Dirigo Business Incentives Program was created in direct response to the long-standing discussion of the Pine Tree Development Zone (PTDZ) program. In May of 2023, [Rep. Tiffany Roberts commented](#) that this program, will “offer benefits to communities and workers across the state.” She offered this testimony in support of the bill that created this program as a replacement for the Pine Tree Development Zone Program.

Dirigo reflects the state’s commitment to greater accountability, transparency, and economic alignment. It was designed with input from business leaders, economic development professionals, and policymakers who understood that while the former system may have been effective in 2004, Dirigo is designed for Maine’s post-Covid economy in 2025.

At Maine & Co., we work with companies every day who are evaluating their location investment decisions. Increasingly, we also work with existing Maine companies who are considering where their next investment should take place. Having a tool like the Dirigo Business Incentive allows us to compete. It makes Maine more investment friendly for both Maine companies and companies evaluating their growth and expansion plans. It also encourages companies to invest in their Maine employees, helping them learn more skills that will benefit them with their current and future employers.

This program doesn’t exist in isolation—it was crafted to directly support the goals outlined in the State of Maine’s 10-Year Economic Development Strategy. That strategy, developed through a broad and inclusive process in 2019, outlined three core goals for Maine’s economy:

1. Grow wages
2. Increase the value of what we sell per worker
3. Increase the number of workers in Maine

The Dirigo program is tightly aligned with these priorities:

- It incentivizes businesses that invest in their company and their workers, helping Maine attract and retain talent.
- New capital investment and workforce training will directly increase worker productivity, thereby increasing the value of what we sell per worker.
- Investing in Maine workers and equipment deployed in our state will drive increases in wages.

To repeal this program would be to walk away from the very strategy the state set for itself—a strategy that is still being realized.

Repeal Is Premature and Harmful to Business Confidence

Repealing Dirigo before it has been fully implemented is not only premature, but actively harmful. Businesses considering Maine need predictability and consistency. They want to know that the state has a coherent economic plan—and that it stands by it. Dirigo is part of that plan.

At Maine & Co., we work with businesses evaluating Maine as a location for expansion or relocation. Before making an investment (in people and equipment) they ask about programs. They ask about workforce. They ask about long-term alignment with state priorities. The Dirigo program helps us answer those questions confidently. Repealing it now would erode that confidence.

A Smarter, More Accountable Approach

Dirigo replaces the PTDZ program with a streamlined, performance-based model that requires businesses to meet clear criteria. It reflects a shift toward smart government—doing more with less, focusing on outcomes, and driving investment where it will make the greatest difference. It is a tool that we, in the economic development community, can use responsibly and effectively. More importantly, it represents an evolution that the legislature demanded as the PTDZ program came to the end of its useful life: a new policy that is focused, strategic, and values-driven...and aligned with the goals of the State and legislature.

Let Dirigo Work

The state invested time, expertise, and bipartisan effort to create this program. Repealing it now not only undermines that work—it undermines the credibility of Maine's economic development efforts. It sends a horrific message from the legislature: after asking for and receiving a new program, it eliminates it at the first opportunity upon cancelling the existing program. Again, quoting the [wise words of Rep. Roberts](#): “I have had conversations with the Department over the past two and a half years as they worked with stakeholders to develop this bill, and I was pleased that they heard the concerns we raised,

took our feedback and addressed it in the bill we have before us today.” We should let Dirigo stand, be fully implemented, and be fairly evaluated on its merits.

On behalf of Maine & Co., I strongly urge the committee to **vote Ought Not to Pass on LD 1664** and allow the Dirigo Business Incentives Program to do the job it was designed to do: help Maine’s economy grow, attract, and retain quality businesses and jobs in a modern, accountable, and strategic way.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,
Peter DelGreco
President, **Maine & Co.**

Peter DelGreco
Maine & Co.
LD 1664

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in opposition to LD 1664.

Best,
Peter