

Joint Standing Committee on Housing and Economic Development
Testimony of Dr. Mike Beauregard, PhD, Founder & CEO of Primagene Therapeutics
In Support of LD 1643
LD 1643, an Act to Establish the Maine Life Science Innovation Center
April 24, 2025

Senator Curry, Representative Gere, and esteemed members of the Joint Committee on Housing and Economic Development. My name is Dr. Mike Beauregard, and I am a synthetic biologist and the Founder & CEO of Primagene Therapeutics, a startup biotechnology company spun out of Rice University in Houston, TX that is working to commercialize new engineered cell therapies to treat autoimmune diseases and other human health conditions. I am honored to testify in support of LD 1643. I have had discussions with biotech economic development representatives of various types from the states of Texas, Utah, Delaware, New York, New Hampshire, and Maine regarding where I should base my fledgling biotech company. I also have experience working in the biotech industry in Massachusetts. After considering an exhaustive list of factors, I've concluded that the best place to move my fledgling biotech company will be the state of Maine. I've come to this conclusion because Maine has many of the basic technical resources that my company will need to succeed at very competitive costs; Maine has an educated and capable workforce; it has an attractive culture, cost of living, and proximity to nature; I have personal connections to the state of Maine; and it is located a day trip away from the global investment and economic centers of Boston and New York and between economic centers on the west coast of the US and in western Europe. However, despite this promise, work is needed to secure Maine's future as a biotechnology hub. In the course of trying to get my company off the ground, a process that may take years, I have discovered some gaps in Maine's biotech ecosystem that could be addressed by a Maine Life Science Innovation Center. For example, there is currently no facility that will allow for-profit entities to conduct animal drug testing in the state of Maine. Animal testing is required for the majority of new drugs to garner the investment and regulatory approval to reach the clinic. Right now, I'm planning on commuting to New Hampshire to do this work. Secondly, there is no lab facility in the state of Maine that currently allows a for-profit entity to work with some industry standard genetic engineering techniques that make up FDA-approved cell therapies available in the clinic today. More gaps will likely become known if I am to continue growing my business in the state of Maine. If public investments like LD 1643 are not made to keep Maine's biotech ecosystem competitive, and my company faces too many unsurmountable challenges, I would have no choice but to permanently move my company and the public economic opportunities that would come with it to a region that is more prepared to enable such business activities. That being said, you stand at a critical juncture today. A vote in favor of LD 1643 would be a vote to enable a prosperous economic future for Mainers. Now is the time to act on this legislation, otherwise you risk losing economic opportunities for your citizens to other states that are willing to make necessary investments in their future today.