



**Testimony by Thomas Rainey
Executive Director, Maine Center for Entrepreneurs**

In support of LD1643, An Act to Establish the Maine Life Science Innovation Center

**Joint Standing Committee on Housing and Economic Development
April 24, 2025**

Senator Curry, Representative Gere, and esteemed members of the Committee on Housing and Economic Development. My name is Thomas Rainey and I am the Executive Director of the Maine Center for Entrepreneurs (known as “MCE”). I reside in Falmouth, and I am providing this written testimony in strong support of LD1643, an *Act to Establish the Maine Life Science Innovation Center*.

The Maine Center for Entrepreneurs (MCE) was established in 1997 as a non-profit organization with the mission to build a statewide training and support network for growth-oriented startup businesses based in Maine. Over the past twenty-eight years, MCE has provided the training, connections, coaching and mentoring entrepreneurs need to commercialize and grow their ideas, products and services to diversify and grow Maine’s economy. Our organization has accelerated the growth of hundreds of businesses and we are known for our “Top Gun” entrepreneurial training and pitch competition and our food industry programs.

In 2020, with support from a US Department of Commerce, Economic Administration Grant and matching funds from the Maine Technology Institute, MCE launched a pilot program to support life science, bioscience and healthcare innovators, entrepreneurs and small businesses aiming to scale their operations. This four-year business accelerator provided hands-on business coaching and forums focused on overcoming common challenges companies face as they attempt to grow and scale. These programs were delivered by industry experts who brought 25+ years of “real-life” experience growing bioscience businesses. Member companies had access to 200+ experienced volunteer mentors, including 25+ with direct bioscience/healthcare experience. Unfortunately, the funding for this Bioscience Cluster Initiative ended in 2024.

Based on MCE’s experience, Maine is positioned to grow the biotech sector but this requires a dedicated, long-term strategy to develop more infrastructure, increase access to early-stage capital, and attract the research and business talent necessary to achieve critical mass. Having worked closely with Maine’s bioscience businesses, I can attest to the urgent need for strategic infrastructure investments to strengthen of Maine’s supply chain in the bioscience sectors.

By supporting biotech infrastructure and innovations through the development of the Maine Life Science Innovation Center, I am confident that LD1643 will contribute to the sustainable growth of Maine's life science industry, strengthen the Maine brand, and ultimately create good-paying jobs. This will help Maine businesses become more competitive, encourage the development of more businesses, and will further diversify the Maine economy. For these reasons, I urge you to vote "ought to pass" on this bill.

MCE welcomes the opportunity to work with the bill's sponsors and other supporters. I would be happy to attend working sessions, or answer questions regarding how our client businesses would benefit directly from this bill.

Thank you for considering this testimonial.

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