

Testimony in support of LD 1693
the Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety

April 28, 2025

Senator Beebe-Center, Representative Hasenfus and distinguished members of the Committee:

My name is Sarah Johnson and I am a resident of Sanford.

I am writing in support of LD 1693, An Act to Establish a Sustainable Housing Development Prison Work Program

Every aspect of this LD 1693 is economically and socially beneficial to Maine.

Maine has an affordable housing crisis. Maine has a workforce crisis and the number of people trained and skilled in construction is dwindling. Maine's climate can require high energy use which LD 1693 addresses by the renewable energy requirements as well as training in green building techniques. LD 1693 requires the use of Maine materials as much as possible and recycled materials where appropriate.

LD 1693 focuses on public safety and addresses some of the challenges of reentering the community after incarceration. The eligibility requirements are strict but the ability to earn participation in it will be highly motivating. LD 1693 also includes life skills and financial literacy programing which are critical factors in reentry success. The program will require dedication from each participant, and that dedication and work will be compensated for with sentence reductions. Successfully transitioning more people back to their family and community sooner will reduce recidivism and enhance community well being.

LD 1693 also offers the possibility of reentry to a home constructed by the program. The level of pride and sense of community that opportunity promotes takes my breath away.

LD1693 also supports community partnerships and offers tax incentives for material donations. Finally, LD 1693 requires oversight and detailed reporting. Data from Maine's Sustainable Housing Development Prison Work Program could be a catalyst for similar programs around the country.

I am grateful to the sponsors and cosponsors of LD 1693 for constructing such a thoughtful, beneficial and productive bill.

I hope you will support LD 1693.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sarah Johnson

Sanford, Maine.

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