Testimony of

Megan Mansfield-Pryor, At-Large City Councilor for the City of Bath

Before

Environment and Natural Resources Committee

In support of

LD 1633, An Act to Promote the Recycling and Reuse of Construction Materials

Senator Tepler, Representative Doudera, and Honorable Committee Members, I appreciate this opportunity to express my strong support of LD 1633. Construction and demolition debris comprises a significant portion of Maine's waste stream and represents untapped economic potential, in addition to unrealized environmental and social benefits.

The 2024 State Waste Management and Recycling Plan Update and 2022 Waste Generation and Disposal Capacity Report from Maine DEP highlights the fact that diminishing landfill capacity calls for action to reduce how much waste we are throwing away in Maine. The report highlighted that just 2.37% of the 600,00+ tons of construction and demolition debris (CDD) generated in Maine in 2022 didn't end up in a landfill. The report's conclusion noted "repurposing of CDD also holds significant economic opportunity, with the potential to support new education pathways, as well as job growth and a new avenue for small businesses."

Constructing a Circular Economy in New York State: Deconstruction and Building Material Reuse, a recent whitepaper out of Cornell University, backs this up, finding that a transition to a circular construction economy could unlock over $3 billion dollars in economic activity, create over 12,000 green jobs, "divert millions of tons of waste, and prevent 75% of embodied carbon emissions" from the building sector in New York State. While Maine is clearly much smaller than New York, we, like New York, also have a huge untapped opportunity in our construction waste stream.

Shifting to a circular building materials economy aligns with the following *Maine Won't Wait 2024* recommendations to promote the manufacture and use of climate-friendly building product and lead by example in our state buildings:

- Increase awareness and education and provide technical assistance to support the use of building materials that have low-embodied carbon,

including techniques for measuring carbon emissions over a building's lifetime, and promotion of low-carbon building materials for municipalities and larger institutions, especially those made in Maine. Divert construction and demolition debris from landfills by encouraging municipalities to provide at least two weeks of public notice for permitted demolition projects so people can salvage reusable building materials.

- Require that by 2030, commercial and state-funded construction projects that meet certain thresholds (embodied carbon, structure size, etc.) be designed for deconstruction and reuse and sourced from reduced carbon materials.

Here in Bath, we are looking at how we can reduce embodied carbon and are in the process of considering how to support a circular building economy locally through encouraging adaptive building reuse and deconstruction. Our Resilient Bath climate action plan sets a goal for the Bath community to reduce its carbon footprint by minimizing waste; reducing the consumption of disposal goods; sharing, fixing, and upcycling materials; and recycling and composting. Repurposing building materials is directly in line with our own climate action plan.

Lastly, a circular building economy aligns with Maine's Solid Waste Management Hierarchy, which prioritizes waste reduction and reuse above all other materials management pathways.

For all the reasons listed above, I urge you to vote in support of 1633.

Sincerely,

Megan Mansfield-Pryor

At-Large City Councilor, City of Bath