

Testimony in SUPPORT of LD 1841

May 14, 2025

Senator Nicole Grohoski, Chair

Representative Kristen Cloutier, Chair

Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Taxation

RE: Testimony in SUPPORT of LD 1841 – An Act to Modify the Process for Selling Tax-acquired Properties

Dear Senator Grohoski, Representative Cloutier, and Members of the Taxation Committee,

My name is Denise Barker, and I serve as the Director for Downeast Economic Development Corp. for the City of Calais and the Town of Baileyville. I am submitting this testimony in strong support of LD 1841, An Act to Modify the Process for Selling Tax-acquired Properties.

Municipalities governments across Maine are not a one size fits all. Each have their own challenges that differ from another. Northern and Downeast Maine are extremely rural areas of the state. In the case of Calais where we have 51% LMI with 3100 residents and 26% of that population earns less than \$30,000 a year, retaining properties for development can strongly support long term economic development. About commercial buildings, the retention in most cases results in new businesses, community engagement and revitalization of an area that may otherwise get overlooked.

I support the proposal of municipalities having an option on what approach works for their town. Rural Maine, not just Calais, will all run into ethical issues at some point. This bill can take the process to a standardized approach to maintain a positive community environment and a supportive city government.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge you to vote Ought to Pass on LD 1841.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

Denise Barker

Director, Downeast Economic Development Corp.

City of Calais / Town of Baileyville