

Capitol Area Recreation Association testimony in support of LD 797

Resolve, to Authorize the Conveyance of Real Property to the Capitol Area Recreation Association

DATE OF HEARING: Monday March 13, 2023, 9:00 a.m.

Honorable Senator Ingwersen, Honorable Representative Pluecker, Distinguished Members of the Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry Committee:

My name is Mark O'Brien, current President of the Capitol Area Recreation Association and Mayor of the City of Augusta. I am here in support of LD 797.

My family has enjoyed the CARA complex as players, coach and fans. I played there as Little Leaguer and went on to coach a team for 17 years. Our children have played different sports up and down the Piggery Road. Now, we watch our grandchildren play. We carry fond memories of our time spent at the fields over the years. Now, I try to give a little back as a CARA board member and officer.

From my vantage point in local government for many years here in Augusta I can point with pride to the several ways the City of Augusta has partnered with CARA in support of the complex. Indeed, the City has a seat on our board of directors. Augusta's citizens have reaped the benefits of first-class playing fields and recreational opportunities.

During our existence we have had a positive relationship with the State of Maine. For our part, CARA has been good stewards of the property, and the quality of the improvements and popularity of our offerings speak for themselves.

CARA as an organization is financially sound.

CARA is and always has been an all-volunteer organization. Our success is due to its volunteers and the generosity of time, resources, and funds over the years from individuals and businesses alike.

CARA is proud of its accomplishments and the citizens of Augusta and Central Maine can be grateful that individuals with vision – and a willingness to work hard – came together to develop this special community asset those many years ago. After nearly 50 years of occupancy, we feel the time has come to take this step to honor that legacy of vision and commitment and to build upon it to help assure the future of this complex for at least another 50 years.