



STATE OF MAINE
DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC
AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT



April 4, 2023

Testimony of Victoria Foley

Neither for nor against LD 1198

**Resolve, Directing the Department of Economic and Community Development to Convene
a Working Group to Improve the State's 10-year Economic Development Strategy**

Good afternoon, Sen. Curry, Rep. Roberts, and distinguished members of the Committee on Innovation, Development, Economic Advancement and Business. I am Victoria Foley, legislative liaison for the Department of Economic and Community Development, and I am testifying neither for nor against LD 1198.

As you likely know, the process of developing Maine's 10-year economic development strategy was extensive. The resulting plan was released in 2019 and includes the contributions of more than 1,300 Maine people. It is a roadmap designed to foster collaboration among the public, private, nonprofit and education sectors to create a diverse and sustainable economy.

An implementation working group has been meeting since the plan's release to support reaching three main goals set out in the plan: growing the average annual wage by 10%, increasing the value of what we sell per worker by 10%, and attracting 75,000 people to Maine's talent pool. Since the plan was released in 2019, we have made great strides. Our department is finalizing a report to share details of the progress we have made as people across the state – not just state government – have worked toward these shared goals. The progress has been good, and we look forward to sharing the report. We expect it will be ready in time for your work session. We also recognize that there is more to be done, and our shared work is far from finished.

The Department is open to adding additional members to the working group that is currently tasked with the implementation and evolution of the plan. Creating a separate, parallel working group is not ideal, as we hope to ensure all are working together with a shared vision. We do also recognize that good strategic plans leave room to continue to adapt to meet the state's needs, and we believe our implementation working group is well positioned to help facilitate those shifts.

Thank you for your time today. I would be happy to answer any questions or provide additional information for your work session.