

# FOCUSMAINE

The Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs  
Testimony from Andrea Cianchette Maker, Co-Chair of FocusMaine

## In Support Of

L.D. 1389

An Act to Establish a Mobile Learning Lab

11 April 2023

Senator Rafferty, Representative Brennan, and distinguished members of the Education and Cultural Affairs Committee, my name is Andrea Cianchette Maker, Co-founder and Co-Chair of FocusMaine. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of L.D. 1389, An Act to Establish a Mobile Learning Lab.

FocusMaine is a statewide economic development organization that works to create quality jobs in Maine's food economy and bioeconomy. We work collaboratively with other non-profits, and industry, government and academic leaders to develop and deliver programs, business tools and the skilled workforce needed to accelerate the growth of these sectors.

Maine is poised for a breakthrough in developing a strong biotech and life sciences ecosystem. We have growing activity in some of the elements needed to do so:

1. A growing cohort of entrepreneurs and businesses
2. Proximity to the robust bioscience research and development hub in Boston
3. A growing workforce in life sciences of 42% in the last 5 years, a pace that exceeds all other New England states (from the most recent Bioscience Association of Maine industry report)
4. New higher education opportunities in biotech and life sciences at Maine's leading academic institutions
5. New investment and venture capital in Maine's growing bioeconomy

Strengthening Maine's K-12 education in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) will help to strengthen this ecosystem, and also to prepare Maine's youth for professional opportunities in the emerging bioeconomy here in Maine. These careers provide opportunities for life-long learning and career growth, and good wages and benefits.

The Mobile Learning Lab described in LD 1389 will enhance hands-on STEM learning for Maine students, efficiently and cost-effectively. It will share expensive equipment and cutting-edge

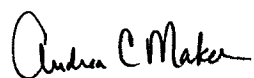
technology with students across the state without burdening local districts with duplicative costs.

It will create a unique opportunity for Maine students to become inspired in STEM fields, prepare them for deeper STEM learning and introduce them to greater career opportunities, in Maine, and beyond, if they so choose.

FocusMaine is excited to work with Educate Maine and other statewide partners on the implementation of the Mobile Learning Lab.

FocusMaine asks for your support for this innovative and forward-looking program.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Andrea C. Maker". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'A'.

Andrea Cianchette Maker  
Co-Chair, FocusMaine