

Lee Umphrey, President & CEO, Eastern Maine Development Corporation
In Support of LD 416, An Act to Authorize a General Fund Bond Issue for
Research and Development
Before the Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs
April 24, 2023

Thank you, Senator Peggy Rotundo and Representative Melanie Sachs and members of the Committee on Appropriations.

My name is Lee Umphrey, President of Eastern Maine Development (EMDC) and I am here today on behalf of our organization, region and state to strongly support LD 416 to Authorize a General Fund Bond Issue for Research, Development and Commercialization. In particular, I am here to emphasize Jackson Lab's critical role as Maine's innovation engine driving our economic vitality and potential for growth.

Here in Eastern Maine, we see the economic impact and community engagement of Jackson Lab on a daily basis. With 1600 Maine employees, Jackson Lab is continuously seeking to meet employee needs, addressing childcare and other issues. The emphasis on workforce housing became a reality last summer with the opening of Hemlock Lane apartments adjacent to the Lab demonstrating their commitment to their workers. They also invest in their employees and community with robust education and learning opportunities and programs.

As an organization, EMDC has a rich history of cultivating and convening successful partnerships that bring traditional and non-traditional, public and private partners together to achieve positive change. Jackson Lab has been that kind of partner helping to boost the local economy and workforce by hiring people and engaging businesses as vendors.

We provide economic and workforce development guidance while leveraging resources and finding opportunities for communities, businesses, and people throughout all of Penobscot, Piscataquis, Hancock, and Waldo counties. These core services have expanded to include workforce development in nine Maine counties and statewide efforts in small business lending, PTAC/APEX government contracting, Disadvantaged Business Enterprise/DBE assistance and comprehensive planning and land use including brownfields assessment, climate resiliency, broadband and transportation supporting towns.

As a member of the Governor's Economic Recovery Committee and active participant with DECD's 10-year Economic Development plan that informed our own Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy, I can relay that strategic and immediate investment in research and development was consistently recognized as being paramount in growing our state's economic success and sustainability. This investment will create more and better paying jobs. For

example, the salaries for jobs at Jackson Lab are higher than the state average. The pandemic was both a crisis and opportunity. With an influx of federal funds, Maine held its own by investing in communities and businesses wisely. Still, we need to look to the future while potential new sectors and businesses are interested in Maine.

To meet this opportunity, we need a consistent and increased level of R& D investment to keep Maine's innovation economy competitive in global markets. The University of Maine and the Maine Technology Institute among others are working daily to create public private partnerships and connecting innovation with new ventures. Jackson Lab, here in Maine, is a global leader in cancer research that's making significant medical progress while supporting its employees and surrounding communities. Supporting LD 416, the Maine R&D Bond makes good sense because it sends a message that this is a Maine priority while supporting a premier Maine organization that promotes the livelihood of the people of our state.