

April 24, 2023

LD 416 An Act to Authorize a General Fund Bond Issue for Research and Development and Commercialization

Brian Bowman, Vice President
Bowman Constructors, Newport Maine

Testifying: In Support

Senator Rotundo, Representative Gattine, members of the Appropriations and Financial Affairs Committee,

I am Brian Bowman from St. Albans, Maine, here to testify in support of LD 416, An Act to Authorize a General Fund Bond Issue for Research and Development and Commercialization.

My brother and I are Co-owners of Bowman Constructors, a 2nd generation family-owned business located in Newport Maine. This is our 36th year in business. We employ a workforce of 35 to 40 skilled construction workers year round, building projects for the University of Maine, Maine State Housing Authority and many municipalities and school districts throughout the state. One project we are currently constructing is the new Child Care Facility for Jackson Laboratory in Bar Harbor, an innovative solution to the workforce problem, supported in part by investments from the state of Maine.

Infrastructure improvements are not only required but are necessary to boost the States competitiveness and economic resilience and help attract and retain young people in Maine. **Most important in my opinion is retaining and attracting young people.** Just a small recent example I would like to share with you. I have a son who is a high school senior. Over a year ago we began the conversation about post-secondary possibilities and where he might attend college. Being a University of Maine graduate myself I naturally suggested that would be a great place to attend and that we should set up a tour. We visited the Advanced Composite Development Center on the Orono campus. To say the least he was absolutely amazed at what was happening at this facility, in Maine, in our backyard and he could be a part of it. He was hooked and he has since been accepted to the University's mechanical engineering program and is looking forward to applying for the jobs available at that facility. It was that easy, one more engineer, one more young person inspired and not moving away from Maine, because of investments made in research and development years ago.

For decades research and development investment has been identified as a critical factor in growing the Maine economy and yet, according to the 2022 Measures of Growth Report, Maine ranks 44th in the country in Research and Development. I would argue that Maine is 44th in the country at retaining and attracting young people. We desperately need to change that.

I urge your support for LD 416, its that easy.

Thank you for your consideration.