



Joseph Baldacci  
Senator, District 9

THE MAINE SENATE  
131st Legislature

3 State House Station  
Augusta, Maine 04333

Testimony of Senator Joe Baldacci introducing

LD 871, “An Act to Provide Support for the Maine Discovery Museum's Informal Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics Education Programs Throughout the State”

Before the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs

April 24, 2023

Good afternoon, Senator Rafferty, Representative Brennan and Distinguished Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs. I am Senator Joe Baldacci, and I represent Senate District 9, which is made up of Bangor and Hermon. I am here today to present LD 871, “An Act to Provide Support for the Maine Discovery Museum's Informal Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics Education Programs Throughout the State.”

This bill would provide state funding support for MDM’s two programs that are available to Mainers free of charge: The Maine Invention Convention, which is a statewide competition for middle school students that is part of the national network of invention conventions run by the Henry Ford Museum in Michigan; and the Maine Science Festival, which is a five-day celebration and exploration of Maine science by the people who do it.

MDM is critical in helping countless Mainers learn about the fields of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM), and has been serving as Maine’s hub of informal STEM education. The programs reach rural and underserved communities all year long, proving their dedication to education and inspiring Mainers to pursue careers in the STEM field. The work that the museum and its staff have done has been incredible to witness. MDM serves 60,000 Mainers inside the museum alone, and another 15,000 through outreach programming. These two programs have been very successful.

MDM’s largest program is, the Maine Science Festival — the first one in Maine and only science festival north of Cambridge MA. It is a celebration and exploration of Maine science by the people who do it. The MSF is held in March every year and has served more than 65,000 people since launching in 2015. Maine Invention Convention introduces middle school students to entrepreneurship and provides Maine students with the opportunity to explore, design, and invent creative solutions to problems in their own world. The skills learned through the invention process are lifelong skills that students can carry with them throughout their lives. These programs are invaluable, and are worth investing so that they can be experienced by generations to come.

I thank you all for your time and consideration, I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.

# **An Act to Provide Support for Maine Discovery Museum's Informal Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics Education Throughout the State**

**Be it enacted by the People of the State of Maine as follows:**

To help ensure that Maine uses all resources and educational routes available to reach its workforce and educational goals, the State of Maine will provide fiscal support to the Maine Discovery Museum in the amount of \$150,000 per year, for the operations of the Maine Science Festival, their all-ages, statewide science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) outreach program, as well as Maine Invention Convention, a statewide competition for middle school students that is part of the national network of invention conventions run by the Henry Ford Museum in Michigan.

## **SUMMARY**

This bill ensures Maine Discovery Museum, a critical player in helping Mainers in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) education, will continue to complement and enhance formal STEM education for pre-K-12, and foster the continuing STEM education of Mainers during and beyond pre-K-12 age with the Maine Science Festival and the Maine Invention Convention.

**Proposed amendment to LD 871, An Act to Provide Support for the Maine Discovery Museum’s Informal Science,  
Technology, Engineering and Mathematics Education Programs Throughout the State**  
Amendment proposed by sponsor, Senator Baldacci

**Sec. 1 Appropriations and allocations.**                   The following appropriations and allocations are made.

**EDUCATION, DEPARTMENT OF**

**School Finance and Operations Z078**

Initiative: Provides ongoing funds to the Maine Discovery Museum to support the Maine Science Festival, the Maine Invention Convention and its statewide science, technology, engineering and math outreach program.

<b>GENERAL FUND</b>	<b>2023-24</b>	<b>2024-25</b>
All Other	\$150,000	\$150,000
<b>GENERAL FUND TOTAL</b>	<b>\$150,000</b>	<b>\$150,000</b>
<b>EDUCATION, DEPARTMENT OF DEPARTMENT TOTALS</b>	<b>2023-24</b>	<b>2024- 25</b>
<b>GENERAL FUND</b>	<b>\$150,000</b>	<b>\$150,000</b>
<b>DEPARTMENT TOTAL - ALL FUNDS</b>	<b>\$150,000</b>	<b>\$150,000</b>