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To: Senator Rotundo, Representative Sachs
Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs
From: David Daigler, President, Maine Community College System
Re: Testimony in Support of LD 503, An Act to Authorize a General Fund Bond Issue to
Fund the Maine Community College System
Date: April 26, 2023

Senator Rotundo, Representative Sachs, and Members of the Joint Standing Committees on Appropriations and Financial Affairs. My name is David Daigler, and I am the President of the Maine Community College System. Thank you for taking the time to allow me to present the Maine Community College System needs as they pertain to LD503, *An Act to Authorize a General Fund Bond to Fund the Maine Community College System*. First, I would like to thank Senator Daughtry for her unwavering support of Maine's community colleges and our students, faculty, adjunct instructors and staff.

Maine's seven community colleges have an aging infrastructure footprint that competes for our limited resources. As I visit our campuses and satellite locations, I not only see the need firsthand, but hear from our presidents, facilities and maintenance staff, faculty, and students about the short-term solutions they are employing to solve long-term problems. As frugal Mainers, we appreciate creative fixes done with whatever we have on hand. I am sure more than one of you has used a coat hanger to reattach a bumper or duct tape to patch a hole. While ingenuity is to be celebrated, it is not a good long-term solution. Eventually, you need to buy a new bumper or upgrade your HVAC system. Eventually, the equipment purchased 20 or 40 years ago cannot keep pace with current use, training needs or wear and tear. We appreciate that five years ago, the legislature approved a \$15 million bond, but it is time now for another investment. In fact, the bond prior to that was five years prior in 2013.

Our community colleges need to assure that the 2.2 million gross square feet of space we have is useful for our current students and can serve our needs into the future. Passage of a general fund bond would improve our educational programs and the student experience by upgrading the facilities at all seven of Maine's community colleges and would allow MCCS to continue to provide Maine people with access to high-skill, low-cost technical and career education.

Without safe, updated buildings, we can't house innovative high-demand programs.

We and our foundation actively search for federal and private support for some of our needs, however, we rely on state funding to ensure that the less exciting, but incredibly necessary, systems work as well as they can. Our Board of Trustees has been clear that we should not raise our tuition to cover these costs—we need to use state bonds.

As of 2022, 30% of Maine Community College System buildings were more than 50 years old, 39% between 25-50 years old, and 31% fewer than 20 years old. Capital demands are increasing as our buildings age. Some core systems are past due for replacements and have the highest risk for failure. We need a general obligation bond to help us meet this need.

Maine's public institutions of higher education contracted with an independent third-party vendor, Gordian to analyze our current needs as they pertain to our physical infrastructure. The Maine Community College System's CFO, Pam Remieres-Morin, will speak to the particulars of the Gordian study in her testimony.

Thank you for your time today, and I'm happy to answer any questions you may have.