



Troy D. Jackson  
President of the Senate

THE MAINE SENATE  
131st Legislature

3 State House Station  
Augusta, Maine 04333

**Testimony in Support of LD 1871**  
**"An Act to Authorize a General Fund Bond Issue to Invest in a Green Energy Materials Building at the University of Maine"**

**Presented to the Joint Standing Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs**  
**May 25, 2023**

Good afternoon Senator Rotundo, Representative Sachs, and honorable members of the Joint Standing Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs. My name is Troy Jackson and I have the honor of serving as Senate President representing the good people of Aroostook County in the Maine Legislature. I'm here today to introduce LD 1871, "An Act to Authorize a General Fund Bond Issue to Invest in a Green Energy Materials Building at the University of Maine."

Earlier this year I had the great privilege of touring the University of Maine's Advanced Structures and Composites Center, or ASCC. I was inspired by the new technologies being developed there and made a commitment that day to introduce a bill to invest in their groundbreaking work. And while I am amazed that ASCC builds wind turbines, boats, bridges and much more out of recyclable materials, I am most compelled by their ability to construct durable, affordable houses.

As legislators, we hear about the housing crisis every day. It results in increased homelessness, an inability to attract workers to our state and more and more middle-income Mainers finding themselves priced out of houses and apartments for their families. The combination of a labor shortage and the high cost of building supplies has severely affected our ability to construct the thousands of homes we need in order to move beyond this crisis.

Making a strategic investment in ASCC is a critical step in solving this problem. The materials used by ASCC's 3-D printer to construct houses come from plant-based resins and pellets made of wood that at one time went to paper mills. Dr. Habib Dagher, who founded and runs the Center, has noted that we have enough of this wood material in Maine to construct 100,000 homes. The material is cheap, there is plenty of it and we have ASCC staff and University of Maine students standing by to build affordable homes. What we need now is what Dr. Dagher has called the 'factory of the future.'

The money from this bond would help build a factory with the capacity to put all of this technology to work building affordable homes on a large scale. We know that these homes are built well and can survive Maine winters. Maine Housing is already partnering with Penquis to develop a neighborhood of houses for the homeless in Bangor. I know I am eager to see this

*State House (207) 287-1500 \* Cell (207) 436-0763 \* Fax (207) 287-5862 \* Toll Free 1-800-423-6900 \* TTY 711  
SenatorJackson1@gmail.com \* Web Site: legislature.maine.gov/senate*

project get off the ground, but ASCC needs to increase capacity and build this factory in order for that to happen.

In the process of constructing this facility and bringing more affordable housing stock into the market, we will expand the profile of what is already the largest university-based research center in Maine. By passing this bill, we can attract more world-class talent to the University of Maine and train the next generation of leaders in this field.

Thank you for considering this bill to ask the voters if they support building a facility that will create renewable, recyclable housing stock so that Maine can offer incoming workers a place to live, help house the homeless and provide the average Mainer with clean, efficient and affordable housing options. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.