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Senator Curry, Representative Roberts and respective members of the Joint Standing Committee on Innovation, Development, Economic Advancement and Business, my name is Dan Coffey, I am a resident of Hampden and am the Director of Operational Human Resources at Cianbro. I am here today to provide testimony in support of LD-262, An Act to Strengthen Maine's Workforce

Cianbro is a 100% employee-owned construction and construction services firm headquartered in Pittsfield, Maine, routinely operating in over 40 States and employing over 4,000 team members; over 800 of which are Maine residents.

Cianbro has been a member and supporter from the inception of the Maine Development Foundation. We believe preparing leadership for the future is critical for both our company and the future of the Maine economy.

We are told, we are one of the top 3 consistent business supporters of the Leadership Maine Program. Why do we continue to support MDF? We view MDF's credibility to be grounded in being objective and nonpartisan, which is rare and important in shaping our state's economic strategies.

Cianbro was a central partner in the "Maine Employers Initiative" which is now Maine Adult Promise — getting adult learners into the right programs and pathways and supporting them to completion. For decades we have partnered on education and workforce development — importantly, with a strong focus on incumbent workers and nontraditional/adult learners and have a shared appreciation for the importance and value of providing multiple educational pathways both non-degree credentials in addition to degrees as does MDF.

We, like everyone in this room share a passionate commitment to the future of Maine's economy and the future of rural Maine. Pivotal work by MDF in assisting the forest products industry and affected communities like Millinocket in their vision and execution of a future opportunity and comeback strategy is inspiring and necessary for our future.

We had the privilege to work on TimberHP in Madison and for those at the opening ceremony we heard from the then-Town Manager Tim Curtis how pivotal MDF's support was in helping the community find a path forward for the mill site and begin readying it for reuse.

What makes MDF a uniquely valuable partner and a uniquely valuable investment for the State of Maine?

1. MDF works from objective data.
2. They work closely with private sector business leaders.
3. They seek to truly understand the needs for capital investment and workforce that drives the economy.

4. MDF has credibility which provides them the ability to work meaningfully and effectively bridging government, education, community, and business to drive to impactful solutions to a degree that almost no other government or quasi-governmental agency has.
5. MDF is nimble. When 5 paper mills closed, MDF assisted industry, community, and university leaders to chart a collaborative Roadmap in just a few months' time.

Thus, the State's investment in MDF has received and will continue to get unique leverage and impact.

It is critical that this investment be a shared load with the State given the huge public benefits and the need for persistence and scale to reach more communities, employers, and sectors.

We understand much of MDF's work is funded by time-limited, episodic federal grants. We can do better.

We have something very special here in Maine and the opportunities in front of us will be best leveraged if we properly fund the Maine Development Foundation.

For the State of Maine to be at its best, MDF must have public and private support so it may take on the big challenges and opportunities from Kittery to Madawaska and Rumford to Eastport.

Now, more than ever, our State must renew its partnership with the Maine Development Foundation to allow for the joint success we have experienced to perpetuate Maine's economic prosperity in the coming years.