



CITY OF BELFAST

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Good afternoon, Senator Rafferty, Representative Brennan, and Honorable Members of the Education and Cultural Affairs Committee.

As the City Manager of Belfast, I would like to convey the City's strong support for LD 2231, a Resolve, to Promote Access to Education and Workforce Development by Transferring Ownership of the Hutchinson Center Property in Belfast to the City of Belfast.

The City of Belfast has a strong commitment to the future of the Hutchinson Center. It has been a vital part of our community for many years.

Banking organization MBNA made significant investments in our community in the late 90s, including the Hutchinson Center. MBNA financed \$12 million for the first phase of its development.

In 2008, the greater Belfast community raised approximately \$1.8 million to support the construction of the second wing of the building for increased educational opportunities for the citizens of our region.

When MBNA was sold to Bank of America, ownership of the Hutchinson Center was then transferred to the University of Maine to continue the tradition of providing the space for educational opportunities in our local community.

Today, the Hutchinson Center remains the only facility of its kind in our part of the state. It is perfectly located to serve Belfast and the entire mid-coast Maine region, a region of our state that is growing quickly.

Loss of the Hutchinson Center as an educational facility would take away the opportunities it has provided in our community for decades. While the University of Maine may not desire to own this building now, the need in our community remains.

The City of Belfast is committed to working with and supporting the Future of the Hutchinson Center Steering Committee as they establish a 501(c)3 organization to manage the Hutchinson Center for the benefit of the citizens of mid-coast Maine for future generations.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Erin Herbig', with a stylized, flowing script.

City Manager Erin Herbig