



**Tony Cameron, Chief Executive Officer, On Behalf of the Maine Tourism Association
In Support of
LD 2258 An Act to Create an Income Tax Credit for Investments in a Team's Qualified Minor League
Baseball Facility to Keep the Team in the State**

March 14, 2024

Senator Grohoski, Representative Perry, and members of the Taxation Committee,

I am Tony Cameron, CEO of the Maine Tourism Association. The Maine Tourism Association, a non-profit, is the state's largest tourism organization supporting members in every type of tourism business such as lodging, restaurants, camps, campgrounds, retail, guides, tour operators, amusements, and historical and cultural attractions. We've been promoting Maine and our 1500 members for over 100 years. I present this testimony in support of LD 2258.

There are significant benefits associated with having a Minor League Baseball (MiLB) team within our great state. As we deliberate on various matters impacting our community, it is imperative to recognize the positive contributions that minor league baseball makes to our economy, community spirit, and overall quality of life.

Economic Impact:

1. **Job Creation:** Minor league baseball teams are substantial job generators. From front office staff and player personnel to game-day operations and facility maintenance, the presence of a MiLB team fosters employment opportunities for a diverse range of individuals within our state.
2. **Local Businesses:** The influx of spectators attending minor league baseball games stimulates local businesses, including restaurants, hotels, and shops. This increased economic activity not only benefits the immediate vicinity of the ballpark but also ripples through neighboring communities.
3. **Tourism Boost:** Minor league baseball draws visitors from both within and outside the state. Families often plan vacations around attending games, contributing to tourism revenue and bolstering our state's reputation as a welcoming and vibrant destination.

Community Engagement:

1. **Family-Friendly Entertainment:** Minor league baseball offers affordable, family-friendly entertainment. By providing an accessible and enjoyable experience, it promotes bonding within families and strengthens the fabric of our communities.

2. **Youth Development Programs:** Many minor league teams actively engage with local youth through community outreach programs, school partnerships, and youth clinics. These initiatives foster a sense of community pride, inspire the next generation of athletes, and contribute to the holistic development of our youth.
3. **Charitable Giving:** The Sea Dogs have exemplified what it means to be a community partner with their charitable giving and fundraising efforts. Most notably the work they do with the Barbara Bush Children's Hospital and the Strike Out Cancer in Kids program. Raising over \$5 million.

Quality of Life:

1. **Civic Pride and Identity:** Minor league baseball teams often become a source of civic pride and identity for communities. The team's success and affiliation with our state instill a sense of unity and belonging among residents. The Sea Dogs may have Portland in their name but the reality is they are Maine's team.
2. **Community Gathering:** Baseball games serve as a gathering place for people of all ages and backgrounds. The ballpark has become a venue for community events, charity drives, and social activities, enhancing the social cohesion within our state.

In conclusion, maintaining and supporting minor league baseball teams in our state is not only an investment in our economy but also an investment in the well-being and vibrancy of our communities. The Sea Dogs have shown their dedication and commitment to their local communities and Maine as a whole. It's time we support them back. I urge the committee to consider the far-reaching benefits of these teams and explore opportunities to further strengthen their presence in Maine. Your support will undoubtedly contribute to the prosperity and cultural richness of our state for years to come. I ask that you pass LD 2258.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Tony Cameron, CEO
Maine Tourism Association
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