

LD 2258

Taxation Committee

Public Hearing March 12, 2024

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

Senator Grohoski, Representative Perry and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Taxation. My name is Susan Deschambault. I am a resident of Biddeford and served four terms representing York County District 32, in the Maine Senate.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of LD 2258. In 1993, I brought my son Dominic and his friend to their first Sea Dogs game. I remember walking into Hadlock Field with both of them wearing their pinstriped Charles Johnson jerseys with the unforgettable hints of teal as a nod to their parent club the Florida Marlins.

We had a great time at that first game. Such a good time that it became a big part of our Mother / son relationship as he entered his pre-teen and teen years.

. When Dominic turned twelve I started taking him to minor league parks outside of Portland. Our love for the Sea Dogs and Minor League teamplay took us to Syracuse, NY; Reading, PA; Memphis, TN; and we enroll as supporting members of Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown, NY. After HS graduation I hosted my son and three of his friends to spend a week in Orlando to witness the first games of the World Series of Baseball.

As a result we watched in the stands as baseball greats played for our club right here in Portland. We've been able to meet Red Sox legends like Pedro Martinez, Johnny Damon, Jason Varitek, Luis Tiant, Johnny Pesky, and Tim Wakefield. We've been so fortunate to watch the best that MiLB has to offer come right through our state. It has been a thrill to watch "our guys" make it big and bring World Series trophies home to New England.

For our family, it's hard and painful to think of a future without them here in Maine. The bill before you will provide a refundable tax credit that will give the Sea Dogs the help they need to make sure they can stay in Portland for years to come. There is no question the club provides massive public good and substantial economic benefits for our State.

According to club data and an economic study by the University of Maine the team employs over 300 people on a full or part time basis. Those jobs, when adjusted for 2023, produce over \$4 million dollars in labor income every year. Ensuring the club remains in Portland, by providing a ONE TIME tax incentive, will guarantee that amount grows every year, rather than stopping all together if the unthinkable happens.

The Sea Dogs host 70 home games every season. A few more if they make it to the playoffs. Every time they host a game hotels, restaurants, transportation services (buses, airplanes, cars – and the people who make the Sea Dogs biscuits - - -, are all benefiting from the visiting club and their fans who travel to Portland. We are a destination stop on their way to tour and visit our beautiful coastal towns.

According to the same study, the multiplier effect of visiting clubs playing in Portland is tremendous. Over \$8 million is spent by visiting clubs on necessary in state services every single year. The Sea Dogs are so much more than an economic benefit, they are a tremendous social and charitable benefit that would be impossible to replace.

According to their 2023 Charitable report the club donated nearly a half a million dollars to charitable causes throughout Maine, most notably to the Maine Children's Cancer Program. They honor their community with events showcasing first responders and good citizens every time the players hit the field. It's hard to imagine the social and charitable loss if the Sea Dogs were ever forced to leave.

Members of the committee, I know these decisions are difficult and the session is in its final weeks. However, in my experience in this building there are bills that come along that just make sense - economically, socially, and culturally. I believe this bill is one that fits that mold. I urge you to vote OUGHT TO PASS on this legislation.

The Sea Dogs have been there for generations of Maine families. It's time we step up for them.

Thank you and I'd be happy to answer any questions you may have