



MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

2 STATE HOUSE STATION
AUGUSTA, MAINE 04333-0002
(207) 287-1440
TTY: (207) 287-4469

Testimony 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

Good Afternoon Senator Grohoski, Representative Perry and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Taxation. I am Representative Billy Bob Faulkingham and I represent House District 12 and serve as the House Republican Leader. I am here to testify 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"***.

At this time of year in the Legislature tensions are high, tempers can be short, and bipartisanship can be hard to find. I am happy to report that right now, in this Committee, there is something that we can all agree on. We all love baseball, and in particular our Portland Sea Dogs. I thank the Senate President for submitting this bill and am proud to stand up and support Maine's hometown team. The bill before you today plays an important role in ensuring our Sea Dogs stay in Maine for the foreseeable future.

You might be thinking, "why does the Senate President, who is from Allagash, and Rep. Faulkingham, who is from Winter Harbor, care about a Portland baseball team? The answer is simple. While the team might play in Maine's largest city, far from where we call home, they contribute to rural schools, provide top-tier family entertainment at affordable prices, and are a huge part of our state economy.

The Sea Dogs are an excellent community partner and ensure that the entire state gets the chance to benefit from their generosity. One example of this is their **Most Improved Student** program. The team provides the opportunity to teachers to hand out a free ticket to a student that, in their view, is most improved during the year. It can be based on any metric they choose. The student gets to attend a game for free, the families get discounted tickets, and they get to walk on the field and have their name read over the loud speaker and displayed in the center field scoreboard. This program is not just offered to Southern Maine teachers; it is offered to any school statewide. There are kids who travel from Aroostook, Washington, and all the other northern Maine counties, just to attend a Sea Dogs game for this special honor. This is just one example of the many community programs the Sea Dogs implement statewide.

The Sea Dogs are also prolific fundraisers for very worthy causes. According to their 2023 Charitable Report the Sea Dogs contributed, donated, or fundraised nearly \$500,000 for charities, schools, and sports teams, among others. This community involvement is most felt by those who are most vulnerable. Programs like the Maine Children's Cancer Program, Make-a-Wish, and the Campaign to End Hunger all receive generous contributions and community events attended and staffed by the Sea Dogs. I am not sure there are many companies that do this much for charitable causes.

The Sea Dogs also provide great entertainment at a great price for Maine families. I know our family enjoys visiting Hadlock Field during the summer vacation. We make the trek to Portland to see the Red Sox stars of tomorrow play right here in Maine. Somehow, the Sea Dogs are able to keep ticket prices low while continuing to provide an amazing experience for families. We are lucky to have them and I think most Maine families would agree.

Some may question the need for a tax credit for a baseball team when there are other pressing needs facing our state. I urge you to look at the financial case for this bill. This business supports over \$8 million in labor income and supplies over 300 full and part time jobs. Jobs that will not come back if the team is forced to leave. Over the next 15 years, the Sea Dogs are projected to create over \$420 million in economic output. That is half a billion dollars that will vaporize if we do not act now.

The question for the committee is simple. Does Maine want to be part of Minor League Baseball? If the Sea Dogs leave, there is no other team that will take their place. The facility will not be MLB compliant and will not be eligible to host another team. Maine has a wonderful franchise here, now. Let us look long term and keep a good thing going while we have it.

I urge you to vote **Ought To Pass** on this bill. Thank you and I would be happy to answer any questions you might have.

Respectfully,



Rep. Billy Bob Faulkingham
House Republican Leader