



**Testimony of Andrea Maker
on behalf of FocusMaine**

**in Support of LD 506, An Act to Authorize a General Fund Bond Issue for Research
and Development and Commercialization before the Committee on Appropriations
and Financial Affairs
April 9, 2025**

LEADERSHIP TEAM

Andrea Cianchette Maker
Co-Chair & President
FocusMaine
Former Partner
Pierce Atwood

Michael E. Dubyak
Co-Chair, FocusMaine
Former President, CEO, & Chairman
WEX, Inc.

Michael Bourque
President & CEO
MEMIC

Dana F. Connors
President & CEO
Workforce Brokers LLC

Jay Dearborn
Chief Strategy Officer
WEX, Inc.

Joan Ferrini-Mundy
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University of Maine

Dr. John Fitzsimmons
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Foundation for Maine's Community
Colleges

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Founder & President
ProSearch, Inc.

Kristen Miale
Managing Director
Caswell Advisory Group, LLC

Amanda Rector Blazek
Maine State Economist

Patrick Woodcock
President & CEO
Maine State Chamber of Commerce

CONTACT

(207) 200-3813
info@focusmaine.org
FocusMaine.org

Mailing Address
128 State Street #101
Augusta, ME 04330

Office Address
The Hús
68 Commercial St
Building C - Floor 2
Portland, ME 04101

Good morning Senator Rotundo, Representative Gattine, and honorary members of the Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs. My name is Andrea Cianchette Maker, and I serve as President of FocusMaine, a statewide nonprofit organization working to accelerate job growth and strengthen Maine's economy by advancing high-potential sectors such as Maine's food and life sciences. I'm here today to testify in strong support of LD 506.

As an organization dedicated to catalyzing sustainable economic growth, we know firsthand that research and development is the backbone of innovation and innovation is what drives opportunity. Unfortunately, Maine continues to lag in R&D investment, ranking 37th nationally. While other New England states invest 5.7% of their gross state product into R&D, Maine invests just 1.1%. This gap threatens our ability to compete, attract top talent, and grow high-quality jobs that will keep Maine's economy thriving for the long term.

LD 506 is a smart, strategic investment that builds on what we know works. Public R&D funding not only drives innovation, but it delivers real returns. The last bond of this kind, approved by voters in 2017, generated over 5,000 jobs and more than \$1.4 billion in economic activity. That's a 31-to-1 return. It's proof that when we invest in R&D, Maine sees real results—jobs, growth, and opportunity that reach every corner of the state.

This bond would help our state achieve the goals in the Maine Innovation Economy Action Plan, a blueprint for creating 10,000 innovation jobs by 2030. LD 506 supports that vision by expanding research capacity, and accelerating commercialization in critical areas like life sciences, clean energy, and marine technology. These are sectors that matter deeply to Maine's future.

At FocusMaine, we've seen how strategic investments in innovation can transform entire industries. Our life sciences sector alone contributes \$2.6 billion annually to the state's economy and supports nearly 10,000 jobs. LD 506 will ensure we can keep that momentum going and continue to build a more diverse, resilient, and competitive economy.

Finally, it's important to note that the people of Maine are with us on this. In 2024, voters approved a \$25 million R&D bond with strong bipartisan support. LD 506 is

the next step, a necessary step to build on public trust and leverage additional private and federal funding.

On behalf of FocusMaine, I urge you to support LD 506 and make the investments needed to secure Maine's economic future. Thank you for your time and consideration. I welcome any questions.

Warm Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Andrea C. Maker". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'A'.

Andrea Cianchette Maker
Co-Chair and President