

Manufacturers Association of **Maine**

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22 April 2025

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Senator Rafferty, Representative Murphy and honorable members of the Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs, we offer this testimony in support of LD 1627, "An Act To Strengthen Maine's Workforce Development System."

The Manufacturers Association of Maine (MAME) is a non-partisan 501(c)6 non-profit grounded in service to its membership, providing a network of resources designed to support the strategic business growth needs of Maine manufacturing entrepreneurs. Maine's manufacturing businesses are diverse, employing almost 60,000 individuals in military and defense, aerospace, metal fabrication, paper, boat building, semi-conductor, wood products, aquaculture and biotech, medical device, composites, and bioplastics, as well as the food and beverage industries. These businesses represent almost 10% of Maine's annual GDP and 14.5% of all the wages paid in the state on a weekly basis. MAME's mission is to help manufacturing grow and succeed and supports Maine's development of future manufacturing assets through a variety of programs.

Our members are unified by one common challenge: finding and retaining the skilled workforce they need to grow and compete. LD 1627 directly supports the kind of workforce development infrastructure that is essential for addressing this need.

MAME has made workforce development a top strategic priority, as outlined in our 2025 Workforce Development Strategy. We have seen firsthand the persistent workforce shortages, limited awareness of manufacturing careers, and insufficient alignment between educational offerings and industry needs. LD 1627 helps address these gaps by supporting programs that build and strengthen talent pipelines (especially for youth and underserved populations), that encourage collaboration between employers, educators, and workforce partners, and create flexible, responsive training pathways that reflect real-world employer needs.

We applaud the provisions of LD 1627 that prioritize regional collaboration, employer engagement, and the use of data to align training with labor market demand. These are pillars of MAME's strategy as well. Through our various marketing efforts, structured internship initiatives, classroom and educator partnerships, and collaboration with organizations like Educate Maine, Junior



Achievement, and Jobs for Maine Graduates (JMG) we are working to increase awareness and access to manufacturing careers every day.

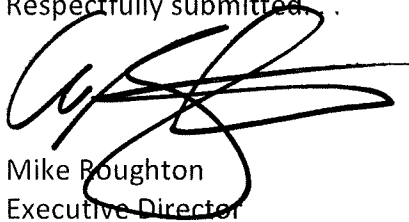
LD 1627 will help accelerate and expand these efforts.

We are especially encouraged by LD 1627's focus on leveraging existing infrastructure—CTEs, community colleges, and universities—in new ways. MAME is actively working with partners to connect these educational assets with industry, and the proposed investments under LD 1627 would provide critical support to these initiatives. Workforce development is not a one-size-fits-all challenge. It requires ongoing coordination, responsiveness, and investment. LD 1627 recognizes this complexity and lays the foundation for a more aligned, effective system that can meet the needs of both jobseekers and employers.

In conclusion, LD 1627 is not just a policy win—it's an economic necessity. It provides the framework for building a stronger, more resilient workforce across Maine. We urge the Committee to vote "Ought to Pass" on this critical legislation.

Thank you for your time, and for your continued commitment to Maine's future.

Respectfully submitted, .



Mike Boughton
Executive Director

