



**Joint Standing Committee on Housing and Economic Development**  
**Testimony from Aileen Huang-Saad, Director of Life Sciences, Health, & Engineering Programs,**  
**Northeastern's Roux Institute, Portland, Maine**

**In Support of LD 1643**

**LD 1643, an Act to Establish the Maine Life Science Innovation Center**

**April 24, 2025**

Senator Curry, Representative Gere, and esteemed members of the Joint Committee on Housing and Economic Development. My name is Aileen Huang-Saad, and I am an Associate Professor of Bioengineering at Northeastern University and the Director of Life Sciences, Health, and Engineering Programs at Northeastern's Roux Institute in Portland, Maine. I am also one of the founding members of the Maine Life Sciences Network and a member of the Maine State Workforce Board. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of LD 1643.

In 2021, I was drawn to Maine from the University of Michigan because of the ambitious vision set forth by the Roux Institute and its alignment with Maine's Economic Development Strategy. Specifically, doubling down on talent growth and attraction, promoting innovation, and its commitment to growing the life sciences sector. This was an opportunity to close the gap between academics and economic development at scale. The past four years have been inspiring, seeing the growth of intentional state-wide collaborations in the interest of the state and its future. What Maine lacks in density, we make up for through intentionally building state-wide networks at all levels, from individuals to institutions.

Since moving to Maine, I have seen Maine make significant strides in cultivating a strong foundation for life sciences that is well positioned to capitalize on the strategic investment described in LD1643. Building upon the strengths of the existing Maine life sciences academic and commercial institutions, the community has come together to demonstrate that the power of the ecosystem is significantly greater than the sum of its parts. Today we have successfully launched a Maine Life Sciences Network that is over

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500 strong on LinkedIn. We launched the Maine Life Sciences Ecomap, a digital platform that offers insights into the deep life sciences expertise and resources across the state, and Educate Maine's Mobile Biolab is traversing the state to connect middle schoolers and educators with life sciences career pathways. And just this past month, University of Southern Maine and the Roux Institute officially opened the doors to BioPilot and BioIN, a collaboration that offers life sciences companies access to capital equipment that supports cell biology, microbiology, and biochemistry research. Companies can co-locate and reserve cutting-edge tools to prototype, analyze, and develop their innovative life sciences processes and products.

Maine's life sciences ecosystem is ready for its next investment as we seek to nurture new enterprises to drive economic growth. LD1643 builds upon the recent momentum of the increasingly collaborative life sciences ecosystem. This commitment will drive our growing ecosystem while attracting new stakeholders to Maine. This initiative strengthens Maine's talent pipeline while enhancing research, commercialization, and advocacy, boosting Maine national competitiveness.

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