



# HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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

## **John "Jack" E. Ducharme III**

34 Heald Street  
Madison, ME 04950  
Cell: (207) 431-0775  
Jack.Ducharme@legislature.maine.gov

### **Testimony in Support of LD 1673 Resolve, to Establish a Pilot Project to Facilitate the Inclusion of Economic Impact Statements in the Legislative Process May 5, 2025**

Senator Baldacci, Representative Salisbury, and Honorable Members of the Joint Standing Committee on State and Local Government. My name is Jack Ducharme, and I have the honor of representing the people of Cornville, Madison, and Norridgewock in the Maine House of Representatives. I come before you today to testify in support of LD 1673, Resolve, to Establish a Pilot Project to Facilitate the Inclusion of Economic Impact Statement in the Legislative Process.

In my role on the Appropriations and Financial Affairs Committee, I have consistently advocated fiscal responsibility and transparency. Our state faces significant economic challenges, particularly in rural areas like my district. The closure of the Madison Paper Industries in 2016, which resulted in the loss of 214 jobs, had a profound impact on our community. After the mill closure, we now have TimberHP in some of the "mill space," but their existence may be in jeopardy due to cost overruns in setting up the production lines as well as general market conditions, conditions that, in part, are impacted by legislation passed in this building. Such events underscore the importance of carefully evaluating the economic implications of our legislative decisions.

Recent studies have shown that Maine's economy is not growing at rates comparable to most other states. We consistently rank in the bottom ten nationally for key economic and demographic indicators. To reverse this trend, we must ensure that our policies foster economic growth and stability.

Implementing economic impact statements would provide legislators with nonpartisan, data-driven analyses of how proposed bills may affect our state's economy. This tool would enable us to make informed decisions, balancing the benefits of proposed legislation against potential economic costs. Not every piece of legislation requires a full-throated economic impact statement. Those that may have long term effects on the people of Maine, the economic viability of Maine and the "out years" effects on Maine business and industry should be evaluated.

District 71  
Cornville, Madison, and Norridgewock

In my time in the Maine Legislature, I have tried to support initiatives that revitalize our economy by fostering innovation and creating jobs. However, not all proposals offer clear economic benefits. At times, we barely understand the pure fiscal impact of many decisions made that may cost Maine taxpayers millions of dollars without understanding the full economic impact of those decisions on the business community and thus the people of Maine in the future. Without thorough analysis, we risk enacting policies that may inadvertently hinder economic growth. Economic impact statements would help assess the long-term effects of policies on talent attraction, jobs, investment, income, gross domestic product, and taxes, to name a few.

A recent study commissioned by the Maine Jobs Council and the Alliance for Maine shows some startling facts about Maine. This study determined that Maine ranks near the bottom in many categories of business development. According to the study, Maine ranks 42<sup>nd</sup> in venture capital investment, personal income, healthcare per capita, and GDP per capita. Maine ranks 43<sup>rd</sup> for our overall economy and as a place to do business. We rank 44<sup>th</sup> in corporate taxes and the job market and 45<sup>th</sup> for our workforce. More startling is that Maine ranks 48<sup>th</sup> in the regulatory environment and overall taxes which specifically measure the effects of Maine's public policy decisions.

In conclusion, incorporating economic impact statements into the legislative process is a prudent step toward ensuring that our policies promote economic prosperity for all Mainers in our global economy. Economic prosperity for all Mainers should be a driving focus of our public policy decisions. I believe that it is only through greater individual economic prosperity that we can advance as a state. I urge the committee to support this proposal to study this type of analysis to gain a deeper insight into the decisions made here in Augusta. If we gain greater understanding of the long-term impacts of the decisions made, we might, just might, make better decisions for the people of Maine.

Thank you.

*Jack Ducharme*