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President of the Senate

THE MAINE SENATE  
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Augusta, Maine 04333

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***Testimony of Senate President Mattie Daughtry introducing  
LD 1863, "An Act to Amend the Laws Governing the Maine Space Corporation"  
Before the Joint Standing Committee Housing and Economic Development***

Senator Curry, Representative Gere and esteemed members of the Housing and Economic Development Committee, my name is Mattie Daughtry, and I proudly serve as President of the Maine State Senate, where I am honored to represent Senate District 23, which includes Brunswick, Freeport, Harpswell, Pownal, Chebeague Island and part of Yarmouth. I stand before you today to present LD 1863, "An Act to Amend the Laws Governing the Maine Space Corporation." This bill is not only an investment in technology and innovation; it is a strategic move to secure Maine's future as a leader in Earth- and space-based technologies.

As we strive to position Maine at the forefront of this dynamic field, we are fortunate to have the expertise and dedication of organizations like the Maine Space Corporation. This body, established by our Legislature in 2022, has already made remarkable strides under the leadership of Dr. Terry Shehata. The Maine Space Corporation is a beacon of innovation, working diligently to build a unified ecosystem that harnesses the strengths of academia, industry, government, and the nonprofit sector. Central to its vision is the development of the Maine Space Complex, a coordinated and comprehensive platform integrating launch infrastructure, research, entrepreneurial support, and workforce training. With this Complex, Maine is positioned to support the complete lifecycle of space innovation, from concept to orbit to practical economic application.

Moreover, the Corporation is also well positioned to help develop and utilize a skilled and diverse workforce. Through STEM education initiatives that reach rural and underserved communities, we are ensuring that all Maine citizens can participate in and benefit from the growing space economy.

However, as we embrace these opportunities, we must also recognize the challenges that lie ahead. In his testimony, Dr. Shehata will highlight the persistent difficulties the Maine Space Corporation faces in accessing essential federal, private, and philanthropic funding resources. Many significant funding opportunities are limited to nonprofit organizations or public instrumentalities, creating barriers that could hinder our progress.

This is where LD 1907 comes into play. This legislation is designed to address these challenges head-on by reinforcing the legal status of the Maine Space Corporation, allowing it to better access federal and philanthropic funding. By formally codifying the Corporation as a quasi-independent state entity and aligning it with the requirements of a 501(c)(3) nonprofit

organization, LD 1863 will empower Maine to engage in vital partnerships with federal agencies and private investors, enhancing our competitiveness in the space sector.

Key provisions in this bill will enhance governance and operational transparency, ensuring that we maintain public trust and accountability as we navigate the complexities of the space economy.

In conclusion, LD 1863 is not just a necessary legislative measure; it is a foundational step towards realizing a robust and innovative future for Maine's economic landscape. I encourage each of you to consider the profound impact this bill could have for our state and support its passage.

I look forward to Dr. Shehata's testimony and the opportunity to continue our work together in securing Maine's place as a national leader in space innovation. Thank you for your attention and your ongoing commitment to advancing Maine's interests in this critical sector.