



MEMO OF OPPOSITION
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Sen. Rotundo
Rep. Gattine
Joint Standing Committee on
Appropriations and Financial
Affairs
100 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333-0100

Re: Testimony Opposing the Proposal to Eliminate the Business Equipment Tax Reimbursement Program (BETR)

My name is Dan Riley, an attorney with the firm of Norman, Hanson & DeTroy. I serve as counsel for the Retail Lumber Dealers Association of Maine (RLDAM), which represents independent lumber and building material dealers, manufacturers, wholesalers, distributors, and other associated businesses in the state of Maine. Our industry employs more than 20,000 Maine residents.

The Retail Lumber Dealers Association of Maine strongly supports maintaining the Business Equipment Tax Reimbursement (BETR) program and opposes any effort to sunset this long-standing provision. For companies like **Hancock Lumber**, **Hammond Lumber Company**, and **S.W. Collins**, BETR is not an abstract policy, it directly impacts annual investment decisions. These are multi-generation, Maine-based employers with deep roots in their communities. When BETR helps a company modernize equipment or expand operations, that investment stays in Maine. It supports local contractors, local suppliers, and local workers.

If BETR is sunset, new equipment purchases would immediately carry a higher and ongoing property tax burden. Faced with that reality, businesses will respond in predictable ways: investments will be delayed, scaled back, or redirected to jurisdictions where business equipment is not subject to comparable taxation.

This reduction in investment does not occur in isolation. When businesses defer or cancel equipment purchases, the effects ripple outward, fewer contracts with local vendors, fewer construction and installation projects, and fewer opportunities for workforce training tied to new technology. Money that would otherwise circulate through local communities instead remains sidelined.

At a time when Maine needs more housing production, stronger rural economies, and continued investment in modern manufacturing capacity, eliminating BETR would move in the wrong direction. BETR has long functioned as a practical tool to keep capital working inside Maine businesses and Maine communities. Preserving it ensures that future investment decisions continue to favor modernization, expansion, and long-term commitment to the state.