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TO: Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs
FROM: Becky Smith, Director of Government and Community Relations
RE: LD 814, *Resolve, Directing the Maine Community College System To Evaluate the Need To Expand Workforce Training Options in Waldo County*
DATE: April 23, 2021

Senator Rafferty, Representative Brennan, and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs, I am Becky Smith, Director of Government and Community Relations for the Maine Community College System. I appreciate this opportunity to provide testimony in support of LD 814, *Resolve, Directing the Maine Community College System To Evaluate the Need To Expand Workforce Training Options in Waldo County*, with a few suggested amendments.

This bill requires us to focus our analysis on 6 industries and trades and we are happy to do so. However, to do a thorough analysis, we plan to evaluate the full workforce training need of Waldo County and may expand the list beyond those 6 crucial areas. We will also undertake a comprehensive analysis, complete with fiscal impacts of providing these training opportunities.

When LD 814 was drafted, it was assumed it would go to the IDEA committee, much like a similar proposal from Senator Curry's predecessor, Senator Herbig, during the 129th. However, the jurisdiction is now with this committee. Because of this change, you may want to amend the bill to have the report come back to this committee and have this committee be able to report out a bill if you so choose.

While 94% of Maine's population live within 25 miles of one of our campuses, we recognize that parts of Waldo County are further from EMCC or KVCC than ideal. Belfast is just about an hour from both KVCC and EMCC, other portions of the county are much closer to one of our colleges, but others are further away.

As I stated in testimony on LD 144 in this committee last month, "the major hurdle we often face when trying to expand our offerings at CTEs is their outdated or insufficient equipment. For example, as we explored offering automotive and welding at Waldo County, we found that their equipment and space was not sufficient to offer college-level coursework. If Waldo County's students are not training on adequate equipment they will not be prepared for college, jobs or apprenticeships they expect after graduation. This is not fair to the hard-working students, their capable teachers or, really, to Maine's future." The same holds for adults who may want training but need to stay close to home for family or work obligations.

We look forward to providing this committee with our analysis and hope you give this bill an "Ought to Pass as Amended" vote.

Thank you.