



Joint Standing Committee on Housing and Economic Development
Testimony of Dana O'Brien, on behalf of the Bioscience Association of Maine (BioME)

In opposition to LD 1664

LD 1664, An Act to Repeal the Dirigo Business Incentives Program

Senator Curry, Representative Gere, and distinguished members of the Committee:

My name is Dana O'Brien, and I am testifying on behalf of the Bioscience Association of Maine, or BioME, the statewide trade organization representing Maine's life sciences sector, including research institutions, growing companies, and workforce partners across the state.

I'm here to speak in strong opposition to LD 1664, which would eliminate Maine's newly launched Dirigo Business Incentives Program.

This program is the result of years of hard work and engagement with diverse stakeholders. It was created to give Maine the modern, competitive tools we need to grow high-value industries, attract private investment, and retain top talent, especially in fast-moving sectors like biotechnology, medical research, and environmental innovation.

The Dirigo program hasn't yet had a chance to demonstrate its full impact. Eliminating it now would send the wrong message: that Maine is stepping back while other states are stepping up. Instead, we should study how to strengthen and build on the program, not dismantle it before it begins.

BioME is also testifying today in support of a Life Science Innovation Center – part of a broader push to grow Maine's research capacity, commercialize discoveries, and create jobs. These are the exact priorities outlined in the 10-Year Economic Development Strategy and the Maine Innovation Economy Action Plan.

If Maine is to meet the ambitious goals in those plans, it needs more – not fewer – tools to compete. That means sustained R&D investment, a long-term commitment to innovation, and keeping smart programs like Dirigo in place.

We respectfully urge the Committee to vote Ought Not to Pass on LD 1664. Let's give this program time to work and use it as a foundation to do even more.

Thank you for your leadership and for the opportunity to testify.