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STATE OF MAINE  
DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC  
AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT



HEATHER JOHNSON  
COMMISSIONER

**Testimony Of: Charlotte Mace**  
**In support of LD 730**

**An Act To Protect Economic Competitiveness in Maine by Extending the End Date for  
Pine Tree Development Zone Benefits**

March 23, 2021

Senator Curry, Representative Roberts and members of the IDEA Committee, my name is Charlotte Mace and I am the Director of the Office of Business Development for the Department of Economic and Community Development. I am here today to testify in Support of LD 730.

The Pine Tree Development Zone program is one of the State's foremost business development tools. When a business connects to DECD to figure out how their investment plans could work in Maine, Pine Tree Zones almost always tops the list of programs the Department discusses with them, if they fit the criteria. Whether a major wood products manufacturer is comparing multiple states to make their next investment, or a local business is looking for ways to grow their steel fabrication shop, Pine Tree Zones is the best package Maine has to offer. It is the largest tool the State has for incentivizing business starts and expansions in Maine, and it forms a key part of the Department's attraction efforts. The State does not have another comparable program.

The PTZ program is important to the State but there are opportunities to improve and better incorporate into the economic development strategy. This legislation would allow for an extension of the Pine Tree Program which creates a stable and predictable landscape for the business community and enable the department to engage in a review. A significant amount of the Department's longer-term policy work was delayed due to the Department's response to the Covid-19 pandemic, this included a full review of the PTZ program. This bill allows us the opportunity to dive deeper into incentive policy. We want to be sure the PTZ, and all of our incentive programs are cohesive with the economic development strategy, reflect current research into best practices for development incentives, and are responsive to the national economic landscape as we hopefully approach the end of the pandemic.

Thank you and I am happy to take any questions.