



STATE OF MAINE
DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC
AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT



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Testimony Of: Kate Foye
Neither for Nor Against LD 1493
Resolve, Directing the Department of Economic and Community Development To Create and Administer a Fund To Provide Seasonal and Tourism Industry Recovery Grants

April 20, 2021

Senator Curry, Representative Roberts, and honorable members of Committee on Innovation, Development, Economic Advancement and Business, my name is Carolann Ouellette and I am the Director of the Maine Office of Outdoor Recreation at the Department of Economic & Community Development. I am here today to present testimony neither for nor against LD 1493, "Resolve, Directing the Department of Economic and Community Development To Create and Administer a Fund To Provide Seasonal and Tourism Industry Recovery Grants".

COVID-19 has created an unprecedented financial crisis for the tourism industry in Maine and throughout the country. We know how incredibly challenging this last year has been for businesses in this industry and are grateful for the hard work that all Maine businesses and organizations are doing to keep their doors open, their employees safe, and their communities strong. We also know that the creation of another grant program would help to alleviate the disruption of operations suffered by Maine's customer facing small businesses and organizations in the tourism, hospitality, and retail sectors due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Tourism Hospitality and Retail Recovery Grant Program, which this bill as created to model, was designed to quickly get funds to eligible businesses using available and verifiable data that the business has already submitted to the State of Maine allowing for a streamlined application process in order to meet the CARES Act deadline. The program did provide badly needed support to over 1500 lodging, restaurant and retail businesses, but we learned that many others that were adversely impacted did not meet the eligibility criteria as outlined

While we support the intent of this bill, which is to continue to provide resources to businesses that were adversely impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, especially those in the hospitality industry, we respectfully request that this bill be carried over until next session so that we may understand the full scope of potential resources available.

Thank you and I would be happy to take any questions.