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Presenting 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"

Senator Curry, Representative Roberts and distinguished members of the Committee on Innovation, Development, Economic Advancement and Business: I am Joe Rafferty, I proudly represent all of the people of Senate District 34 in the Maine Senate and I'm here to present 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."

Estimates vary but indications made by the Maine Tourism Association are that its industry lost \$2.3 billion in 2020. The loss in revenue last July alone was nearly \$400 million according to Maine Revenue Services. The impact continues to be felt statewide. For many, the inability to sustain a profit puts them at risk of survival, which is the core intention and motivation behind LD 1493. I am here today to ask that you move forward in using federal funds to establish a grant program formulated to protect this industry and the tens of thousands of jobs it supports.

It is my goal to see a grant system established for the purpose of compensating eligible businesses for revenue and profits lost in the calendar year 2020 as a result of state directed closures or economic disruptions due to the restrictions imposed to limit the spread of the coronavirus pandemic. An application would be made by an eligible business at any time and the department shall issue grants on a first-come, first-served basis until the fund is depleted.

Please note that the current language has some qualifiers. However I would offer an amendment at this time. To strike: **A country club, golf club In Sec. 3. Listed as item #4 in line 16 on page 2.**

I want to thank my fellow lawmakers and co-sponsors for their assistance and support in standing up for Maine's hospitality and tourism industry. I'm confident we will do the right thing for the thousands of workers and families impacted.

Thank you and I will do my best to address any questions you may have.

Senator Joe Rafferty