



The Joint Standing Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs
The Joint Committee on Housing and Economic Development
Testimony of the Bioscience Association of Maine (BioME)

In Support of LD 210

LD 210

An Act Making Unified Appropriations and Allocations from the General Fund and Other Funds for the Expenditures of State Government and Changing Certain Provisions of the Law Necessary to the Proper Operations of State Government for the Fiscal Years Ending June 30, 2025, June 30, 2026, and June 30, 2027

February 5, 2025

Senator Rotundo, Senator Curry, Representative Gattine, Representative Gere, and esteemed members of the Joint Standing Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs and Joint Committee on Housing and Economic Development:

My name is Dana O'Brien, I am the President of BioHarbor Strategies, a public affairs consulting firm. I am a resident of Ogunquit, Maine, and am honored to be here representing my client, the Bioscience Association of Maine, or "BioME," in support of LD 210.

BioME is a trade organization representing more than 230 bioscience companies and research institutions in Maine. BioME's mission is to advance economic growth and opportunities within the life sciences community in Maine. Its industry support efforts include policy development and advocacy, collaboration, education, and economic and workforce development.

BioME is pleased to support the Governor's proposed budget, particularly the inclusion of \$3 million in "one-time funding for the Maine Technology Institute (MTI) to facilitate and expedite the growth of the life sciences sector in Maine." This investment is a critical step toward expanding Maine's innovation economy, ensuring that our state remains competitive in the rapidly growing life sciences industry.

The life sciences sector in Maine is diverse, dynamic, and vital to our state's economy and public well-being. This industry spans multiple fields, including:

- **Human and Veterinary Medicine** – This includes advancements in pharmaceuticals, diagnostics, and biomedical research that improve health outcomes for both people and animals.
- **Marine Biology** – This includes research into sustainable fisheries, aquaculture innovation, and ocean-based biotechnology that supports Maine's coastal economy.
- **Food and Agricultural Science** – This includes cutting-edge work in food safety, agricultural biotechnology, and alternative proteins that bolster Maine's role in feeding the future.



Bioscience Association of Maine

- **Forestry and Biomaterials** – This includes the development of bio-based products and sustainable forestry innovations that create new markets for Maine’s natural resources.

According to BioME’s 2024 [Life Sciences Industry Report](#), the sector employs nearly 10,000 Mainers and contributes \$2.3 billion to Maine’s Gross Regional Product (GRP). Over the past five years, life sciences jobs have grown by 31 percent, far outpacing the state’s overall employment growth. The high wages and strong job multiplier effect (2.56 additional jobs for every job created in the industry) demonstrate that an investment in life sciences is an investment in Maine’s broader economy.

Despite this promising growth, Maine still lags other New England states in key areas, including access to venture capital, availability of biotech infrastructure, and workforce development. The [Maine Innovation Economy Action Plan](#), along with other state economic development strategies, has identified life sciences as a key driver of economic expansion, but more investment is needed to fully capitalize on the opportunities in this sector.

The Governor’s proposed \$3 million investment in life sciences directly aligns with the recommendations outlined in state economic development strategies. Depending upon how MTI chooses to allocate the resource, additional funding holds potential to:

1. **Build essential infrastructure** – Creating lab spaces, incubators, and biomanufacturing facilities to support startups and established firms.
2. **Expand workforce development** – Addressing talent shortages by supporting STEM education, internships, and workforce training programs.
3. **Enhance research and industry partnerships** – Strengthening collaborations between universities, businesses, and research institutions to accelerate innovation.
4. **Attract private investment** – Using state funding as a catalyst to draw in venture capital and federal research dollars.

Maine has a once-in-a-generation opportunity to establish itself as a leading center for life sciences in New England. By approving this investment, the Legislature will help Maine companies bring groundbreaking discoveries to market, create high-quality jobs, and drive long-term economic growth.

In addition to recognizing and lending its full support to the Governor’s proposed investment in life sciences, BioME will support additional legislative action designed to speed the success of the broad life science industry within Maine, including measures to establish a Maine Life Science Innovation Center and enact additional research, development, and commercialization funds via state bonding authority. We look forward to speaking with you about those bills at a later date.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I would be happy to answer any questions.

Respectfully submitted,

Dana O’Brien
Bioscience Association of Maine