



The Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs
Testimony from Billie Cary, Education Programs Manager, Bioscience Association of
Maine (BioME)

In Support of LD 281

An Act to Provide Support for Certain Maine Discovery Museum Science, Technology,
Engineering, and Mathematics Educational Programming Throughout the State

April 11, 2025

Senator Rafferty, Representative Murphy, and distinguished members of the Education and Cultural Affairs Committee, my name is Billie Cary, Education Programs Manager for The Bioscience Association of Maine. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of LD 281, An Act to Provide Support for Certain Maine Discovery Museum Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics Educational Programming Throughout the State

General background:

The Bioscience Association of Maine's (BioME) mission is to advance economic growth and opportunities in the life sciences community of Maine by allocating equal involvement in advocacy, education, economic development, workforce development, and out-of-state business attraction.

Learning about STEM and science specifically, is not just important for raising well rounded Maine students, but also has the potential to impact Maine's economy when these students later enter the workforce. 95% of science learning happens outside of school settings, in places like the Maine Discovery Museum and at events like the Maine Science Festival and Maine Invention Convention. While Bioscience Association of Maine is a proud sponsor of these efforts, total sponsor support of Maine Discovery Museum (and other non-profits) has dropped in recent years.

94% of MDM's mission driven programming is available free-of-charge. They provide extensive outreach to rural communities who often have no other access to engaging STEM learning outside of the classroom. For these valuable experiences to continue to remain free of charge, they need state funding assistance.

With more than 580 life sciences companies in Maine the need for a skilled workforce in the sciences is primed to continue. Currently there are 9,832 life science jobs in Maine which contribute \$2.3 Billion to Maine's GRP. To keep this industry growing, Maine needs students who have the STEM interest and knowledge that the Maine Discover Museum provides.

Funding from this bill will provide valuable foundational support to this organization and it's programs. If implemented, Maine Discovery Museum will be able to continue doing

the valuable work that they are doing and bringing STEM education into communities that may otherwise not have access to it.

The Bioscience Association of Maine supports L.D. 281: An Act to Provide Support for Certain Maine Discovery Museum Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics Educational Programming Throughout the State. Our Maine students need access to high quality STEM education to grow our skilled scientific workforce for the future.

Sincerely,

Billie Cary
Education Programs Manager
Bioscience Association of Maine