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Tuesday, April 04, 2017

Testimony in Support of LD 318, An Act to Authorize a General Fund Bond Issue to Support Economic Development with High-Resolution Geospatial Data

Senator Hamper, Representative Gattine, and members of the Appropriations and Financial Affairs Committee;

My name is Paul Peck and I am the President of the Maine Real Estate & Development Association (MEREDA). I am also a resident of North Yarmouth. I am writing to you today in support of L.D. 318, An Act to Authorize a General Fund Bond Issue to Support Economic Development with High-Resolution Geospatial Data.

L.D. 318 would send a \$6 million bond question to the voters to provide partnership funds and matching grants for geospatial data acquisition. Some of Maine's communities have already begun using geospatial data to enhance their mapping products and provide more accurate planning data for realtors, developers, engineers and surveyors. If passed, this bond question will enable more communities, and the state, to make use of this technology to encourage economic development, streamline project plan reviews, and enhance our understanding of Maine's geographical landscape.

If passed, this bond question would leverage an estimated \$8 million from federal, county, municipal and state sources to fund a grant program to digitize municipal tax maps. It would lower the cost for development projects, planning new and replacement sewer lines, and acquiring high resolution orthoimagery. Finally, it would reduce operational costs for many state agencies.

In short, this bond question would support a program that will be very beneficial to those in the land use and development community, as well as to our state and local government. On behalf of MEREDA, I urge you to support the passage of LD 318 and to send the bond question to Maine voters.

Thank you for your consideration of this legislation.

Sincerely,

Paul Peck
President, Maine Real Estate & Development Association