The Maine State Chamber of Commerce supports policies and regulations that spur the investment in and help grow our economy. One of the biggest issues facing our state today is our current workforce challenge. It is widely known that to be competitive in the global workplace of the future, that by 2025, Maine will need approximately 158,000 *more* workers with postsecondary degrees or credentials than exist here today. Right now, employers in health care, construction, finance, manufacturing, and other sectors report difficulty in finding workers with the right skills. Many of these professions are science and technology related and employers are finding that there are not enough workers with the skills needed to perform these jobs.

It is essential that all students have access to a high-quality science and technology education that provides them with the skills and knowledge they need to be well-informed citizens, to be prepared for college and careers, and to understand and appreciate the scientific enterprise.

From health care to environmental stewardship, a countless number of personal and societal issues require citizens to make informed decisions based on their understanding of science and technology. Today's modern workforce depends on individuals with scientific and technological skills. According to the U.S. Department of Education, we are not preparing all students to achieve high levels of science performance; we are failing to graduate enough students with the skills needed to fill the growing number of jobs in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics.

The Maine State Chamber of Commerce encourages the Department of Education to take an in depth look at Maine’s science and technology standards and make adjustments that will better prepare students to enter into college and/or careers and to be successful in their futures.

Thank you for your time.