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## **Kanson-Benanav to speak at MEREDA conference May 18 at the DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel in Portland**

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Portland, ME Jesse Kanson-Benanav, has set his sights on Maine, where he will headline a conference later this spring. Kanson-Benanav has been instrumental as a leader on the front lines of a potential sea change in the conversation about development, and will join Mainers for a discussion about how to move development forward, with an update on the present status of pro-growth efforts and implications for the future of communities.

Kanson-Benanav was invited north by the Maine Real Estate & Development Association (MEREDA), the statewide trade association that encourages responsible development and ownership of real estate. The conference is set for the afternoon of May 18, at the DoubleTree.

“Renewed interest in Maine’s cities and downtowns have placed pressure on communities to build in unprecedented ways. Recognizing the crippling effect of NIMBY, or ‘not in my backyard,’ ways of thinking on housing prices, economic stability and general diversity of communities, we aim to make a case for growth and development,” said MEREDA president Paul Peck in announcing the event. “Coined ‘in my backyard,’ or YIMBY, this movement is an overt counterargument to oppositional mindsets - and it’s gaining traction quickly.”

Local experts will augment the conversation. James Brady, visionary of the Press Hotel and the Portland Company redevelopment in the East End, Jeff Levine of the City of Portland, Dana Totman of Avesta Housing, and Patrick Venne of Redwood Development Consulting are all expected to speak about their local experiences, as part of a panel moderated by Elizabeth Boepple of BCM Environmental & Land Law.

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