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Resolve, To Study Maine's Agricultural Creative Economy Sector

Sec. 1 Departments to study the value-added agricultural creative economy sector of the State's economy. Resolved: That the Department of Agriculture, Food and Rural Resources, in collaboration with the Department of Labor, Department of Economic and Community Development and Department of Conservation, shall undertake a study of the value-added agricultural creative economy sector of the State's economy. The study, which may be referred to as "the ACES study," must include consideration of:

1. The economic impact of farmers in the State expanding their businesses and diversifying their products to meet local demand for locally grown produce, meats, artisan and specialty food products, the use of shared-use kitchens and farm-to-school programs;

2. Barriers to small-scale food production that cater to the tourist trade and local demand;

3. Creation of a cabinet-level advisory board comprising representatives of the Department of Agriculture, Food and Rural Resources, Department of Labor, Department of Economic and Community Development and Department of Conservation to develop long-term strategies in agriculture and agricultural value-added businesses in all aspects of economic development;

4. Creation of positions in the Department of Agriculture, Food and Rural Resources to develop and nurture the agricultural creative economy, including veterinarians, dairy inspectors, meat inspectors, livestock marketing specialists, home and small food processing specialists, advisors on new trends such as shared-use kitchens and farm-to-school programs and agricultural and business liaison specialists; and

5. Funding for the marketing of agricultural and food products from the State, a food policy council, a revolving loan program and training in cooperation with the University of Maine Cooperative Extension in business and food processing; and be it further

Sec. 2 Report. Resolved: That, no later than December 5, 2007, the Department of Agriculture, Food and Rural Resources shall report the findings of the ACES study to the Joint Standing Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry and the Joint Standing Committee on Business, Research and Economic Development; and be it further

Sec. 3 Legislation. Resolved: That, no later than December 5, 2007, the Department of Agriculture, Food and Rural Resources shall submit legislation to the Second Regular Session of the 123rd Legislature to implement recommendations developed during the ACES study process.