



132nd MAINE LEGISLATURE

FIRST REGULAR SESSION-2025

Legislative Document

No. 357

S.P. 143

In Senate, February 3, 2025

An Act to Establish a State Minimum Hourly Wage for Agricultural Workers

Received by the Secretary of the Senate on January 30, 2025. Referred to the Committee on Labor pursuant to Joint Rule 308.2 and ordered printed.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D M Grant'.

DAREK M. GRANT
Secretary of the Senate

Presented by Senator BENNETT of Oxford.
Cosponsored by Representative ROEDER of Bangor and
Senators: TALBOT ROSS of Cumberland, TIPPING of Penobscot.

1 **Be it enacted by the People of the State of Maine as follows:**

2 **Sec. 1. 26 MRSA c. 7, sub-c. 2-B** is enacted to read:

3 **SUBCHAPTER 2-B**

4 **AGRICULTURAL EMPLOYEE MINIMUM HOURLY WAGES AND RELATED**
5 **PROVISIONS**

6 **§651. Definitions**

7 As used in this subchapter, unless the context otherwise indicates, the following terms
8 have the following meanings.

9 **1. Employ.** "Employ" means to suffer or permit to work.

10 **2. Employee.** "Employee" means an individual employed to perform agricultural labor
11 as defined in the Employment Security Law and the Federal Unemployment Tax Act,
12 except that members of the family of the employer who reside with and are dependent upon
13 the employer are exempt from this subchapter.

14 **3. Employer.** "Employer" means a person or entity that directly or indirectly engages
15 the services or permits the work of an individual employed to perform agricultural labor or
16 an individual employed in certain activities related to agriculture.

17 **4. Wages.** "Wages" means compensation paid to an employee in the form of legal
18 tender of the United States and checks on banks convertible into cash on demand and
19 includes the reasonable cost to the employer that furnishes the employee board or lodging.
20 "Wages" also includes compensation paid through a direct deposit system, automated teller
21 machine card or other means of electronic transfer as long as the employee either can make
22 an initial withdrawal of the entire net pay without additional cost to the employee or the
23 employee can choose another means of payment that involves no additional cost to the
24 employee.

25 **§652. Minimum hourly wage**

26 An employer may not employ an employee at a rate less than the rates required by this
27 section.

28 Beginning January 1, 2026, the minimum hourly wage for an employee is \$14.65 per
29 hour. On January 1, 2027 and each January 1st thereafter, the minimum hourly wage then
30 in effect must be increased by the increase, if any, in the cost of living. The increase in the
31 cost of living must be measured by the percentage increase, if any, as of August of the
32 previous year over the level as of August of the year preceding that year in the Consumer
33 Price Index for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers, CPI-W, for the Northeast
34 Region, or its successor index, as published by the United States Department of Labor,
35 Bureau of Labor Statistics or its successor agency, with the amount of the minimum hourly
36 wage increase rounded to the nearest multiple of 5¢. If the highest federal minimum hourly
37 wage is increased in excess of the minimum hourly wage in effect under this section, the
38 minimum hourly wage under this section is increased to the same amount, effective on the
39 same date as the increase in the federal minimum hourly wage, and must be increased in
40 accordance with this section thereafter.

1 bill also provides remedies for employees and penalties for employers for unpaid minimum
2 hourly wage violations.