



## MOFGA Testimony In Support Of

LD 1678 - *Resolve, Directing the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry to Study and Report on Soil Carbon Sequestration Incentive Programs*

April 26, 2023

Good afternoon Senator Ingwersen, Representative Pluecker and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry. My name is Heather Spalding and I am deputy director of the Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association (MOFGA). I'm speaking in support of LD 1678 - *Resolve, Directing the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry to Study and Report on Soil Carbon Sequestration Incentive Programs April 26, 2023.*

A broad-based community, MOFGA is creating a food system that is healthy and fair for all of us. Through education, training and advocacy, we are helping farmers thrive, making more local, organic food available and building sustainable communities. MOFGA certifies 535 organic farms and processing operations representing roughly \$90 million in sales and we are working hard to create opportunities for Maine's next generation of farmers. Each of these farmers is a Maine businessperson for whom economic health and environmental health are interdependent.

LD 1678 would direct the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry to study and report on soil carbon sequestration incentive programs that can be applied to land in Maine, including but not limited to forest land, agricultural land, conservation land and wetlands, and determine possible funding sources that may be used to fund the programs. We appreciate that this work could take place in the context of the Department's developing Healthy Soils Program. MOFGA participated in the Natural and Working Lands Group of the Maine Climate Council and appreciates that this bill embraces recommendations of Maine's Climate Action Plan, specifically Strategy E2, to protect Maine's environment and working lands and waters, promote natural climate solutions and increase carbon sequestration, and develop new incentives to increase carbon storage. We thank Representative Osher for her leadership on this bill.

Much of the educational programming at MOFGA focuses on building the health of the soil as a way to mitigate the adverse effects of climate change, help farmers become more resilient to dramatic and unpredictable shifts in weather, and to help sequester more carbon in the ground. Organic management and low impact forestry practices have a critical role to play in addressing the adverse effects of our dramatically changing climate. Healthy soil is the cornerstone of organic agriculture and is interdependent with healthy and sustainable forest growth. MOFGA supports public policies and funding mechanisms that promote carbon-sequestering soil-building practices and improve farmers' and foresters' ability to tolerate, adapt to, and recover from extreme weather conditions. We envision a Maine where farmers and foresters are helping mitigate climate change while making a good living that allows them to support their families and their communities. We believe that farmers and foresters who embrace carbon sequestering, healthy soils practices should be rewarded for the efforts they are expending to address our climate crisis.

Thank you and I'd be happy to answer questions if you have any.

