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Legislative Document

No. 1605

S.P. 642

In Senate, April 15, 2025

An Act to Support Farmers and Food Banks Affected by Federal Funding Cuts to Their Existing Contracts

(AFTER DEADLINE)

Approved for introduction by a majority of the Legislative Council pursuant to Joint Rule 205.

Received by the Secretary of the Senate on April 11, 2025. Referred to the Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry pursuant to Joint Rule 308.2 and ordered printed.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "D M Grant", is positioned above the printed name of the Secretary of the Senate.

DAREK M. GRANT
Secretary of the Senate

Presented by Senator BRENNER of Cumberland.

Cosponsored by Representative GUERRETTE of Caribou and

Senators: BENNETT of Oxford, BLACK of Franklin, HICKMAN of Kennebec, TALBOT ROSS of Cumberland, TIMBERLAKE of Androscoggin, Representatives: DILL of Old Town, JACKSON of Oxford, PLUECKER of Warren.

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

Sec. 1. 7 MRSA §320-D is enacted to read:

§320-D. Food System Protection Program

The Food System Protection Program, referred to in this section as "the program," is established and administered by the department to provide zero-interest loans and other resources to qualifying producers within the State, and qualifying nonprofit organizations within the State, established for the purpose of reducing hunger and increasing food security that have been affected by federal funding cuts and other changes to the status of contracts and certain federal programs. The department shall establish an application process for individuals and entities to apply for loans under the program and criteria for eligibility and adopt rules, as necessary, for the administration of the program. Rules adopted pursuant to this section are routine technical rules as defined in Title 5, chapter 375, subchapter 2-A.

SUMMARY

This bill establishes the Food System Protection Program, administered by the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry, for the purpose of providing zero-interest loans and other resources to qualifying producers within the State, and nonprofit organizations within the State, established for the purpose of reducing hunger and increasing food security that have been affected by federal funding cuts and other changes to the status of contracts and certain federal programs.