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**Resolve, Directing the Department of Agriculture,
Conservation and Forestry To Create a Pilot Program
To Support the State's Small Food Processors**

Sec. 1 Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry to create pilot program to support small food processors in the State. Resolved: That the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry shall create a pilot program, referred to in this resolve as "the program," to support small food processors in the State. The program must be modeled on the Maine Farms for the Future Program under the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 7, chapter 10-B and administered by the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry, either directly or by contract with a suitable organization. The program must provide assistance to an eligible small food processor in developing a detailed business plan that involves changes in the processor's operation to increase the vitality of the business and must provide investment money to help implement the plan. The Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry shall organize a review panel to evaluate and approve applications for participation in the program and for investment support; and be it further

Sec. 2 Criteria; program elements; funding. Resolved: That the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry shall develop:

1. Criteria for determining what a small food processor is and for determining eligibility to participate in the program;
2. Program elements, including developing a business plan for a participating small food processor and assembling a service package using outside providers to assist in developing the business plan; and
3. Funding for the program, including investment support for a participating small food processor from grants or loans from various funding sources; and be it further

Sec. 3 Report. Resolved: That, no later than January 1, 2014, the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry shall issue a report including any suggested legislation to implement the program to the Joint Standing Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry. The Joint Standing Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry may submit legislation based upon the report to the Second Regular Session of the 126th Legislature.

SUMMARY

This resolve directs the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry to develop a pilot program to assist small food processors similar to the Maine Farms for the Future program.