

PLEASE NOTE: Legislative Information **cannot** perform research, provide legal advice, or interpret Maine law. For legal assistance, please contact a qualified attorney.

## **An Act To Support Local Agricultural Production**

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

**Sec. 1. 7 MRSA §213, sub-§§3 and 4** are enacted to read:

**3. Implementation schedule.** The following percentages of foodstuffs purchased by a state or school purchaser, except for a school purchaser at a school that participates in the National School Lunch Program in accordance with 7 Code of Federal Regulations, Part 210 (2007), must come directly from Maine food producers or from food brokers who assist in the distribution of foodstuffs produced or harvested by Maine food producers:

- A. By December 31, 2023, at least 15%;
- B. By December 31, 2027, at least 20%;
- C. By December 31, 2037, at least 25%; and
- D. By December 31, 2038, at least 35%.

**4. Grant program; exemptions.** The department shall establish a grant program to provide assistance with kitchen modifications at state and school facilities that provide meals but are lacking equipment to prepare foodstuffs that come directly from Maine food producers or from food brokers who assist in the distribution of foodstuffs produced or harvested by Maine food producers. The grant program may provide assistance to fund up to 80% of needed kitchen modifications and to fund up to one full-time employee to prepare foodstuffs produced or harvested by Maine food producers. The department shall include in the program a process to provide exemptions for state and school facilities that have kitchens that cannot be modified to prepare foodstuffs that come directly from Maine food producers or from food brokers who assist in the distribution of foodstuffs produced or harvested by Maine food producers from the requirements in subsection 3.

There is created the Maine Foodstuffs Grant Program Fund, a nonlapsing fund in the department. The fund must be used by the department for the purposes of this subsection. The fund may receive and accept allocations, appropriations, grants and contributions of money for the program.

The department shall adopt rules necessary to implement this subsection. Rules adopted pursuant to this subsection are routine technical rules pursuant to Title 5, chapter 375, subchapter 2-A.

## **SUMMARY**

This bill creates the following implementation dates and minimum percentages regarding Maine foodstuffs that state and school purchasers must purchase directly from Maine food producers or food

brokers: at least 15% by December 31, 2023, 20% by December 31, 2027, 25% by December 31, 2037 and 35% by December 31, 2038. It excepts from the requirements school purchasers at schools participating in the National School Lunch Program.

It also establishes a grant program to provide assistance with kitchen modifications at state and school facilities that lack equipment to prepare Maine foodstuffs and directs the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry to implement the grant program. Grant funds may be used for kitchen modifications or funding kitchen staff at a facility to prepare Maine foodstuffs. The grant program provides a process for exemptions for institutions with kitchens that cannot be modified to prepare Maine foodstuffs from the requirement to meet the implementation schedule.