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## JOINT RESOLUTION TO RECOGNIZE THE MULTIFACETED AGRICULTURE OF MAINE

**WHEREAS**, recent statistics show that farming in Maine has grown, that Maine continues to lead the New England states with 8,174 farms and that the value of Maine's crops and livestock has grown 24% since the last census of agriculture; and

**WHEREAS**, Maine's agricultural enterprises provide more than \$764,000,000 through the sale of farm products and contribute more than \$2,000,000,000 annually to the State's economy, and Maine agricultural products are increasingly available locally in farmers' markets, schools and institutions; and

**WHEREAS**, Maine farmers are the stewards of 1,450,000 acres of land, a vital resource in maintaining Maine's rural economy; and

**WHEREAS**, Maine is first in the world in the production of wild blueberries, a world leader in the production of brown eggs, first in New England in the production of food, first in New England in the value of aquaculture sales, second in New England in milk and livestock production, third in the Nation in the production of maple syrup and eighth in the Nation in the production of fall potatoes, is the fastest-growing artisanal cheese-producing state in the Nation and is the only state involved in the commercial production of fiddleheads; and

**WHEREAS**, agriculture has always been a part of Maine's prosperity, maintaining much of Maine's scenic open space, providing recreational opportunities and contributing to the character of Maine's rural communities; now, therefore, be it

**RESOLVED:** That We, the Members of the One Hundred and Twenty-eighth Legislature now assembled in the Second Regular Session, pause in our deliberations to recognize Maine's agricultural community and its contribution to the betterment of our State, to pledge our support and encouragement and to urge the youth of Maine to pursue the growing opportunities for careers in today's technologically advanced agriculture industry; and be it further

**RESOLVED:** That a suitable copy of this resolution, duly authenticated by the Secretary of State, be transmitted to the Commissioner of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry, as a token of the esteem in which those in this vital field are held.