

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

Amend the bill by striking out the title and substituting the following:

**'An Act Relating to Maine's Agriculture, Food System
and Forestry Infrastructure Investment To Strengthen
Maine's Agriculture, Food and Forestry Economy'**

Amend the bill by striking out everything after the enacting clause and inserting the following:

'**Sec. 1. 7 MRSA c. 10-C** is enacted to read:

CHAPTER 10-C

**MAINE'S AGRICULTURE, FOOD SYSTEM AND
FORESTRY INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT**

§ 320-A. Maine's agriculture, food system and forestry infrastructure investment

1. Definitions. As used in this chapter, unless the context otherwise indicates, the following terms have the following meanings.

A. "Producer" means a person in the State who grows, manufactures, harvests or otherwise creates food, fiber or forest products and value-added products, including a person engaged in farming, fishing, logging, harvesting or other agricultural and forestry-related activities.

2. Goals; duties. The commissioner shall:

A. Strengthen the State's agriculture, food and forestry economy with a priority of making resulting efforts more inclusive of and increasing investments in historically marginalized, underrepresented and underserved communities; and

B. Improve investments in agriculture, food and forestry in the State to increase access to new markets and opportunities for producers, processors, small businesses and consumers in the State in the producing, processing, packaging, distribution, marketing, sale and consumption of food, fiber or forest products and value-added products.

3. Powers. In carrying out the purposes of this chapter, the commissioner may:

A. Hire or assign staff or contractors;

B. Seek and accept funds from public and private sources;

C. Use technical assistance, loans, grants or other means or resources; and

D. Administer funds, grants or programs.

Sec. 2. Maine agriculture, food system and forestry infrastructure investment; assessment. The Commissioner of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry shall undertake a Maine agriculture, food system and forestry infrastructure investment assessment either directly or with a suitable contractor. The purpose of the assessment is to support the duties of the commissioner under the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 7, chapter 10-C. The commissioner shall conduct a comprehensive review of current state and external partners' efforts to achieve the duties under Title 7, chapter 10-C.

1. Definitions. For purposes of this section, the following terms have the following meanings.

A. "Food system" means all processes, infrastructure and persons involved in feeding a population, including growing, harvesting, collecting, processing, packaging, transporting, marketing, selling, consuming and disposing of food and food-related items in the State.

B. "Supply chain" means the chain of distribution by which agricultural, food and forest products in the State are moved from the producer to the consumer and may include intermediate entities such as processors, packagers, warehouse operators, distributors, wholesalers and retailers.

C. "Value chain coordination" means an approach to product development that connects the existing elements within the supply chain and identifies key gaps in the supply chain in existing infrastructure or services and opportunities for effective investment.

2. Assessment outcomes. The commissioner may:

A. Recommend necessary improvements or changes to current state grant and loan programs that support the agriculture, food and forestry sectors of the State, including any recommendations for the creation of new financing programs based on other successful state models;

B. Review and organize existing recommendations from trade groups and others that pertain to Maine's agriculture, food and forestry economy infrastructure, including but not limited to processing, transportation, storage and warehousing, distribution and wholesale and retail sales; and

C. Identify gaps, undertake additional data collection and outline short-term and long-term actions that can be taken by the Legislature, the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry, other state government agencies or external partners to productively meet and resolve infrastructure needs.

3. Assessment duties. In conducting the assessment, the commissioner shall:

A. Undertake strategic analysis to inform short-term and long-term benchmarks to carry out the duties under Title 7, chapter 10-C and achieve the outcomes under this section as they pertain to agriculture, food system and forestry infrastructure needs, including:

(1) Identifying the highest priority areas for policy interventions, including legislation, capital investments, technical assistance and value chain coordination in the agriculture, food and forestry-related systems;

(2) Recommending how State Government may collaborate with other entities to minimize duplication in efforts and programs and bridge gaps in technical assistance, services, education, research and development; and

(3) Recommending initiatives that improve regulation, marketing, transportation or distribution systems that enhance market opportunities for Maine agriculture, food and forestry businesses; and

B. Consult and collaborate with community development corporations and financial institutions in the development of agriculture, food system and forestry investment infrastructure to support the outcomes in this section.

Sec. 3. Assessment report. The Commissioner of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry shall submit an interim report relating to the assessment under section 2, no later than November 30, 2020, and a final report, no later than September 1, 2021, with findings and recommendations, including suggested legislation, to the joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over agriculture, conservation and forestry matters. The joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over agriculture, conservation and forestry matters may submit a bill during the Second Regular Session of the 130th Legislature relating to the subject matter of the report.

1. At a minimum, the report must:

A. Include an update on any measurable outcomes or actions deriving from the assessment and an accounting of any funds expended by the commissioner due to the assessment; and

B. Include a summary of the commissioner's efforts, recommendations and developments relating to the assessment toward the statutory duties under the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 7, chapter 10-C and expenditures for the previous year and any planned focus or activities for the next year or following years.

Amend the bill by relettering or renumbering any nonconsecutive Part letter or section number to read consecutively.

SUMMARY

This amendment, which strikes and replaces the bill, requires the Commissioner of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry to carry out the following duties:

1. Strengthen the State's agriculture, food and forestry economy with a priority of making resulting efforts more inclusive of and increasing investments in historically marginalized, underrepresented and underserved communities; and

2. Improve investments in agriculture, food and forestry in the State to increase access to new markets and opportunities for producers, processors, small businesses and consumers in the State in the producing, processing, packaging, distribution, marketing, sale and consumption of food, fiber or forest products and value-added products.

The amendment also directs the commissioner to undertake a Maine agriculture, food system and forestry infrastructure investment assessment either directly or with a suitable contractor to support the goals of strengthening the State's agriculture, food and forestry economy and improving investments in agriculture, food and forestry. The commissioner is required to conduct a comprehensive review of current state and external partners' efforts to achieve the stated goals.

FISCAL NOTE REQUIRED
(See attached)