



131st MAINE LEGISLATURE

SECOND REGULAR SESSION-2024

Legislative Document

No. 2212

H.P. 1419

House of Representatives, February 15, 2024

An Act to Strengthen Maine's Agriculture, Food System and Forest Products Infrastructure Investment

Approved for introduction by a majority of the Legislative Council pursuant to Joint Rule 203.

Reference to the Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry suggested and ordered printed.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "R B. Hunt".

ROBERT B. HUNT
Clerk

Presented by Speaker TALBOT ROSS of Portland.
Cosponsored by Senator INGWERSEN of York and
Representatives: FAY of Raymond, GUERRETTE of Caribou, HALL of Wilton, OSHER of
Orono, PLUECKER of Warren.

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

2 **Sec. 1. 7 MRSA §320-C, sub-§2**, as enacted by PL 2021, c. 483, Pt. KK, §2, is
3 repealed and the following enacted in its place:

4 **2. Membership.** The board consists of the commissioner or the commissioner's
5 designee, the Commissioner of Economic and Community Development or the
6 commissioner's designee and 15 members pursuant to this subsection.

7 M. The commissioner and the Commissioner of Economic and Community
8 Development shall jointly appoint 5 members of the board as follows:

9 (1) Two members from relevant financial institutions with experience in the
10 agricultural and forest products industries;

11 (2) One manufacturer of forest products;

12 (3) One manufacturer of value-added agricultural products or representative of the
13 value-added agricultural products industry; and

14 (4) One member actively engaged in providing marketing assistance, market
15 development or business and financial planning.

16 N. The President of the Senate shall appoint 5 members of the board as follows:

17 (1) One member of a statewide industry group representing conventional nondairy
18 farming;

19 (2) One member of a statewide industry group representing the forest products
20 industry;

21 (3) One member representing the supply chain in processing, manufacturing or
22 distribution;

23 (4) One member of a statewide industry group representing dairy producers; and

24 (5) One member representing historically underserved racial populations in
25 nondairy farming.

26 O. The Speaker of the House shall appoint 5 members of the board as follows:

27 (1) One member of a statewide industry group representing organic nondairy
28 farming;

29 (2) One member from a statewide group representing the logging and trucking
30 industry;

31 (3) One member representing the supply chain in processing, manufacturing or
32 distribution;

33 (4) One member who is a member of a federally recognized Indian nation, tribe or
34 band in this State; and

35 (5) One member representing historically underserved racial populations in
36 nondairy farming.

37 Board membership must reflect a diversity of skills and experience relevant to investment
38 in agricultural, food and forest products processing and manufacturing industries and

1 represent the racial diversity of the food system in the State with specific representation by
2 Indian tribes, communities of color and other underserved communities and populations.

3 **Sec. 2. 7 MRSA §320-C, sub-§7** is enacted to read:

4 **7. Board member conflicts of interest.** If a member of the board holds a position in
5 a producer or business that causes a conflict of interest with regard to a vote the board is
6 holding, the member may not participate in that vote.

7 **Sec. 3. 7 MRSA §320-C, sub-§8** is enacted to read:

8 **8. Uses of disbursements limited.** A producer that receives a disbursement from the
9 fund must have a processing or manufacturing facility that is located in the State, shall use
10 the disbursement to support the operations of the facility and shall use the disbursement to
11 obtain the primary agricultural, food or forest product used in its commercial products from
12 a farm or a forest or waters in the State or from offshore waters to be collected in the State.

13 **Sec. 4. Appropriations and allocations.** The following appropriations and
14 allocations are made.

15 **AGRICULTURE, CONSERVATION AND FORESTRY, DEPARTMENT OF**
16 **Maine Agriculture, Food and Forest Products Investment Fund Z384**

17 Initiative: Provides one-time funding to support public-private partnerships that facilitate
18 strategic investments in the State's agricultural, food and forest products processing and
19 manufacturing industries. These funds are nonlapsing.

20 GENERAL FUND	2023-24	2024-25
21 All Other	\$0	\$10,000,000
22		
23 GENERAL FUND TOTAL	<u>\$0</u>	<u>\$10,000,000</u>

24 **SUMMARY**

25 This bill amends the laws governing the Maine Agriculture, Food System and Forest
26 Products Infrastructure Investment Advisory Board to require the President of the Senate
27 and the Speaker of the House to appoint members to the board and prohibit a member of
28 the board who holds a position in a producer or business that causes a conflict of interest
29 with regard to a vote the board is holding from participating in that vote. It also requires
30 producers of agricultural, food and forest products receiving disbursements from the Maine
31 Agriculture, Food and Forest Products Investment Fund to obtain their primary agricultural,
32 food or forest products from within the State.

33 Finally, this bill provides a one-time appropriation of \$10,000,000 in fiscal year 2024-
34 25 to the fund.