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Legislative Document

No. 1858

S.P. 728

In Senate, May 5, 2025

An Act to Promote Local Seafood in Schools

Received by the Secretary of the Senate on May 1, 2025. Referred to the Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs pursuant to Joint Rule 308.2 and ordered printed.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "D M Grant", is positioned above the printed name of the Secretary of the Senate.

DAREK M. GRANT
Secretary of the Senate

Presented by President DAUGHTRY of Cumberland.
Cosponsored by Representative RIELLY of Westbrook and
Senators: DUSON of Cumberland, INGWERSEN of York, LIBBY of Cumberland, MOORE of Washington, TALBOT ROSS of Cumberland, TEPLER of Sagadahoc, Representatives: FAULKINGHAM of Winter Harbor, MURPHY of Scarborough.

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

2 **Sec. 1. 20-A MRSA §6602, sub-§16** is enacted to read:

3 **16. Local Seafood Fund.** The Local Seafood Fund is established within the
4 department. The fund is authorized to receive revenue from public and private sources.
5 The fund must be held separate and apart from all other money, funds and accounts. Any
6 balance remaining in the fund at the end of the fiscal year must be carried forward to the
7 next fiscal year. The fund must be used to match \$1 for every \$3 a school administrative
8 unit pays for seafood purchased directly from a person who fishes commercially, a
9 cooperative of persons who fish commercially, an aquaculture farmer, an aquaculture
10 farmer's cooperative, a local food hub, a local food processor or a food service distributor
11 in the State, to a maximum state contribution of \$5,000 per school administrative unit in
12 fiscal year 2025-26 and subsequent years or \$5,500 per school administrative unit if
13 funding is received and the school administrative unit sends a food service employee to
14 local seafood training administered by the department under subsection 18. All seafood
15 purchased using the fund must be grown or harvested in the State, with the exception of
16 processed and value-added food products produced in the State, which must meet standards
17 set by the department. The department shall create standards for allowable processed and
18 value-added food products produced in the State and provide guidance to school
19 administrative units regarding which of those products are allowable for reimbursement
20 under this subsection and subsection 17. At the end of a fiscal year, the school
21 administrative unit may provide the department with receipts documenting purchases
22 pursuant to this subsection during that year. Reimbursement or partial reimbursement to
23 school administrative units may be made only up to the amount available in the fund.
24 Failure to reimburse does not constitute an obligation on behalf of the State to a school
25 administrative unit. The department shall apply for federal grant funding to provide state
26 contributions in excess of \$5,000 per school administrative unit in fiscal year 2025-26 and
27 subsequent years pursuant to this subsection if applicable grant funding is available. The
28 department may accept grant funding from hospitals and other sources to provide state
29 contributions in excess of \$5,000 per school administrative unit in fiscal year 2025-26 and
30 subsequent years pursuant to this subsection.

31 **Sec. 2. 20-A MRSA §6602, sub-§17** is enacted to read:

32 **17. Local Seafood Fund reimbursement.** Reimbursement or partial reimbursement
33 to school administrative units pursuant to subsection 16 may be made only up to the amount
34 appropriated to support the provisions of the Local Seafood Fund established in subsection
35 16. Funds appropriated for this purpose do not lapse but must be carried forward to the
36 next fiscal year to be used for the same purpose.

37 **Sec. 3. 20-A MRSA §6602, sub-§18** is enacted to read:

38 **18. Local seafood training.** The department shall administer a program to encourage
39 and expand the use of local seafood in school food service programs. As used in this
40 subsection, unless the context otherwise indicates, "local seafood" means seafood grown
41 or harvested by a Maine food producer as defined by Title 7, section 212, subsection 2, and
42 "food hub" means any business or organization that locates and obtains food from local
43 growers and fisheries and is able to handle the logistics of supplying and delivering local
44 seafood to schools. The program must:

A. Provide competitive grants for a training program to be conducted in up to 6 regions to provide training throughout the State without cost for local school food service programs to encourage and expand the use of local seafood in school food service programs. The training program must emphasize practical training for food preparers, including creative and effective cooking skills using local fresh seafood and local seafood procurement skills. The training program must also inform participants about practical supply chain solutions, including local food hubs and cooperatives within and across each region of the State;

B. Foster collaboration between school food service programs throughout the State;

C. Facilitate and encourage the use of local food hubs; and

D. Provide guidance to schools in the use of local seafood products and the nutritional attributes of local seafood and provide strategies for encouraging maximum knowledge and acceptance of the nutritional value of locally grown and harvested seafood by students and communities.

The department shall apply for federal grant funding to implement this subsection. The department may implement this subsection only if the department receives funding covering the costs of the program under this subsection.

SUMMARY

This bill establishes the Local Seafood Fund to be used to match \$1 for every \$3 a school administrative unit pays for seafood purchased directly from a person who fishes commercially, a cooperative of persons who fish commercially, an aquaculture farmer, an aquaculture farmer's cooperative, a local food hub, a local food processor or a food service distributor in the State, to a maximum state contribution of \$5,000 per school administrative unit in fiscal year 2025-26 and subsequent years or \$5,500 per school administrative unit if funding is received and the school administrative unit sends a food service employee to a local seafood training program established and administered by the Department of Education pursuant to the bill.