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Date: (Filing No. H-)

AGRICULTURE, CONSERVATION AND FORESTRY

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**STATE OF MAINE
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
131ST LEGISLATURE
FIRST SPECIAL SESSION**

COMMITTEE AMENDMENT “ ” to H.P. 235, L.D. 384, “An Act Addressing Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry in Maine”

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

'An Act to Provide Emergency Aid to Dairy Farmers Affected by the Crisis in Production Costs'

Amend the bill by inserting after the title and before the enacting clause the following:

'Emergency preamble. Whereas, acts and resolves of the Legislature do not become effective until 90 days after adjournment unless enacted as emergencies; and

Whereas, market instability, labor shortages, inflation, limits on milk production, supply chain delays and distribution disruptions are driving Maine dairy farmers out of business; and

Whereas, Maine has lost approximately one-quarter of its dairy farms since 2020; and

Whereas, dairy farms are integral to Maine's rural communities and agricultural economy; and

Whereas, it is critically important that this legislation take effect before the expiration of the 90-day period; and

Whereas, in the judgment of the Legislature, these facts create an emergency within the meaning of the Constitution of Maine and require the following legislation as immediately necessary for the preservation of the public peace, health and safety; now, therefore,'

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

'Sec. 1. Transfer from General Fund unappropriated surplus; pandemic relief for dairy farmers. Notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary, on or before July 30, 2023, the State Controller shall transfer \$5,329,667 from the unappropriated

COMMITTEE AMENDMENT

1 surplus of the General Fund to the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry,
2 Milk Commission program, Other Special Revenue Funds account to provide one-time
3 pandemic volatility payments to Maine milk producers who produced milk and reported
4 production information to the Maine Milk Commission in calendar year 2022 and are
5 currently participating in the Maine Dairy Stabilization "Tier" Program. The administrator
6 of the Maine Milk Pool shall calculate and distribute payments to qualifying farmers at a
7 rate of \$1 per hundredweight of milk production. The administrator of the Maine Milk Pool
8 may use existing distribution methods within the Maine Milk Pool program to expedite the
9 distribution of payments.

10 **Sec. 2. Appropriations and allocations.** The following appropriations and
11 allocations are made.

12 **AGRICULTURE, CONSERVATION AND FORESTRY, DEPARTMENT OF**
13 **Milk Commission 0188**

14 Initiative: Provides a one-time allocation to allow distribution of pandemic volatility
15 payments to Maine dairy farmers who meet specific milk production criteria.

16	OTHER SPECIAL REVENUE FUNDS	2023-24	2024-25
17	All Other	\$5,329,667	\$0
18			
19	OTHER SPECIAL REVENUE FUNDS TOTAL	<u>\$5,329,667</u>	<u>\$0</u>

20
21 **Emergency clause.** In view of the emergency cited in the preamble, this legislation
22 takes effect when approved.'

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

25 **SUMMARY**

26 This amendment replaces the bill, which is a concept draft. The amendment provides
27 one-time pandemic volatility payments to Maine milk producers who produced milk and
28 reported production information to the Maine Milk Commission in calendar year 2022 and
29 are currently participating in the Maine Dairy Stabilization Program, also known as the
30 Tier Program. The amendment provides a one-time appropriation at a rate of \$1 per
31 hundredweight of milk production in fiscal year 2023-24 from the unappropriated surplus
32 of General Fund to the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry, Milk
33 Commission program to provide one-time payments to Maine milk producers.

34 **FISCAL NOTE REQUIRED**

35 **(See attached)**