

STATE OF MAINE

—
IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD
TWO THOUSAND TWENTY-FIVE

—
S.P. 487 - L.D. 1198

Resolve, Directing the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry to Assess Its Current Meat and Poultry Inspection Programs

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

Whereas, Maine's meat and poultry inspection programs exist to protect the health and welfare of consumers by ensuring that livestock and poultry used in the production of meat and poultry products, respectively, are humanely handled and disease-free and the resulting products are wholesome, not adulterated and correctly labeled and packaged; and

Whereas, this legislation must take effect before the expiration of the 90-day period to allow the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry to begin its review of Maine's meat and poultry inspection programs as soon as possible; 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, be it

Sec. 1. Meat and poultry inspection study. Resolved: That, within existing budgeted resources, the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry shall conduct a review of programs and processes related to meat and poultry inspections, including processes related to exemptions from inspections, to determine areas for possible improvements, efficiencies and enhanced flexibility to benefit agricultural producers, processors and retail and public customers. In conducting the review under this section, the department shall consult with livestock and poultry producers and processors, the United States Department of Agriculture, the University of Maine Cooperative Extension and other stakeholders that the department determines necessary to assess existing programs' statutory authorities, rules, regulations, policies and practices, including those involving investigations, enforcement and staff training. As part of the review under this section, the department shall conduct a survey of meat and poultry producers and processors to obtain feedback on rules, regulations, policies and practices affecting the regulated community. The department shall also review the existing exemptions that relate to poultry processors that process certain numbers of poultry per year and the department's

existing cooperative agreement with the United States Department of Agriculture, Food Safety and Inspection Service and that agreement's related requirements. The department shall develop strategies to ensure uniform interpretation of the United States Department of Agriculture's regulations and exemptions.

Sec. 2. Report. Resolved: That, by January 15, 2026, the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry shall submit a report based on its review in section 1 describing strategies, findings and recommendations, including suggested legislation, to the Joint Standing Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry. The Joint Standing Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry may submit legislation related to the report to the Second Regular Session of the 132nd Legislature.

Emergency clause. In view of the emergency cited in the preamble, this legislation takes effect when approved.