



# 129th MAINE LEGISLATURE

## FIRST REGULAR SESSION-2019

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Legislative Document

No. 1531

H.P. 1114

House of Representatives, April 9, 2019

**An Act To Establish the Maine Food System Investment Program  
To Create Quality Jobs and Support Farms, Fisheries and Food-  
related Businesses**

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

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "R B. Hunt".

ROBERT B. HUNT  
Clerk

Presented by Representative TALBOT ROSS of Portland.  
Cosponsored by Senator MOORE of Washington and  
Representatives: HICKMAN of Winthrop, JAVNER of Chester, MAXMIN of Nobleboro,  
O'CONNOR of Berwick, O'NEIL of Saco, PLUECKER of Warren, ROBERTS-LOVELL of  
South Berwick, Senator: DILL of Penobscot.

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

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

3 **CHAPTER 10-C**

4 **MAINE FOOD SYSTEM INVESTMENT PROGRAM**

5 **§320-A. Maine Food System Investment Program**

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

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

12 B. "Producer" means a person in the State who produces and provides food directly  
13 from the site of the food production, including a person engaged in farming or fishing  
14 activities.

15 C. "Program" means the Maine Food System Investment Program established in  
16 subsection 2.

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

21 E. "Value chain coordination" means an approach to food system development that  
22 connects the existing elements within the supply chain and identifies key gaps in the  
23 supply chain in existing infrastructure or services and opportunities for effective  
24 investment.

25 **2. Program established; purpose.** The Maine Food System Investment Program is  
26 established. The program is administered by the department, either directly or by  
27 contract with a suitable organization, with assistance from the Department of Economic  
28 and Community Development. The purpose of the program is to strengthen the food  
29 system, including the agriculture, seafood and fisheries and other food sectors and the  
30 supply chain, to increase access to new markets and opportunities for producers,  
31 processors, small businesses and consumers in the State in the producing, processing,  
32 packaging, distribution, marketing, sale and consumption of food products.

33 **3. Outcomes.** The intended outcomes of the program are to:

34 A. Increase sustainable economic development and quality employment in the food  
35 system, including the agriculture, seafood and fisheries and processing industries and  
36 businesses involved in the transportation, storage and warehousing, distribution and  
37 wholesale and retail sale of food;

1 B. Improve soil fertility, water resources and the resiliency of working waterfronts;  
2 and

3 C. Increase the availability of healthy foods produced in the State for consumers in  
4 the State.

5 **4. Duties.** The program shall:

6 A. Develop and implement a strategic framework that outlines goals and strategies in  
7 a 10-year time frame to carry out the purposes of subsection 2 and achieve the  
8 outcomes in subsection 3, including:

9 (1) Identifying the highest priority areas for capital investments, technical  
10 assistance and value chain coordination in the food system;

11 (2) Recommending where and how private, state and other public investments  
12 may be used most effectively to address food production challenges and barriers  
13 to food infrastructure and distribution needs;

14 (3) Recommending how State Government, universities, agriculture, seafood and  
15 fisheries industries, food-related businesses, nonprofit organizations and industry  
16 groups may collaborate to minimize duplication in efforts and programs and  
17 bridge gaps in technical assistance, services, education, research and  
18 development;

19 (4) Informing agriculture, seafood and fisheries industry and food system lenders  
20 and investors of the information collected under this paragraph to facilitate the  
21 financing of sectors in the food system;

22 (5) Recommending initiatives that improve regulation, marketing or  
23 transportation or distribution systems that enable direct sales of food products  
24 from producers to consumers in the State; and

25 (6) Recommending investments, resources or policies to augment or improve  
26 state programs, nonprofit organization or industry efforts in building or  
27 maintaining value chain coordination and relationships and communication  
28 among producers, food processors, distributors, sellers, stakeholders, interest  
29 groups and other interested parties.

30 The program shall review and periodically update the strategic framework based  
31 upon an ongoing inventory of the agriculture, seafood and fisheries, food processing  
32 and food system financial investment and lending sectors; the supply chain; and  
33 assets and other components of the food system and food system analyses or related  
34 studies;

35 B. Make periodic recommendations regarding rules or legislation to the department  
36 and the Legislature to:

37 (1) Establish state investment priorities that support the outcomes in subsection  
38 3;

39 (2) Align state policies, rules and resources with each other to support the  
40 outcomes in subsection 3; and

1                   (3) Identify additional initiatives, policies and resources necessary to implement  
2                   the strategic framework under paragraph A, including staffing, provider  
3                   contracts, the creation of a fund to accept appropriations, allocations, grants,  
4                   donations and other funds and implementation of a grant or loan program for  
5                   producers, food businesses and related industries;

6                   C. Coordinate with postsecondary institutions, including the University of Maine  
7                   System, and private and nonprofit organizations to align food programs, technical  
8                   assistance, research and investments to avoid duplication and to support the outcomes  
9                   in subsection 3;

10                  D. Facilitate information sharing and collaboration among farms, seafood and  
11                  fisheries entities, food businesses and organizations and investors to build  
12                  opportunities for food products across the supply chain;

13                  E. Develop a list of food system stakeholders and interest groups, including state  
14                  agencies and other governmental units, private entities, nonprofit organizations and  
15                  industry groups, to provide input, consultation and collaboration in carrying out the  
16                  purposes of this chapter and to convene an annual meeting of the stakeholders and  
17                  interest groups to review the strategic framework under paragraph A, reinforce  
18                  collaboration and coordination efforts and discuss issues and make recommendations  
19                  concerning future development and implementation of the framework;

20                  F. Consult and collaborate with community development corporations and financial  
21                  institutions in the development of food system investment infrastructure to support  
22                  the outcomes in subsection 3; and

23                  G. Issue an annual report to the commissioner and the joint standing committee of  
24                  the Legislature having jurisdiction over agriculture matters summarizing the  
25                  program's activities, developments in implementation and maintenance of the  
26                  strategic framework under paragraph A and expenditures for the previous year and  
27                  any planned focus or activities of the program for the next year or following years.

28                  **5. Powers.** In carrying out the purposes of this chapter, the program may:

29                  A. Hire or assign staff;

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

31                  C. Use technical assistance, loans, grants or other means or resources approved or  
32                  provided by the department;

33                  D. Create or designate an advisory board consisting of food system stakeholders,  
34                  industry groups and other interested parties to assist in carrying out the provisions of  
35                  this chapter; and

36                  E. Administer funds, grants or programs established with respect to the program by  
37                  the department or the Legislature.

38                  **6. Rules.** The department may adopt rules to carry out the purposes of this chapter.  
39                  Rules adopted pursuant to this subsection are routine technical rules as defined by Title 5,  
40                  chapter 375, subchapter 2-A.



1 of greatest need in the food system. The program is also authorized to make  
2 recommendations regarding rules or legislation to the department and the Legislature that  
3 will direct investment or establish policies or priorities in carrying out the goals of the  
4 program. The program is required to submit a 6-month and a one-year report to the  
5 Legislature subsequent to the implementation of the program and an annual report on the  
6 progress of and developments regarding the 10-year strategic framework.