



**Testimony by William Norbert
Governmental Affairs and Communications Manager**

In Support of L.D. 206

An Act to Make Supplemental Appropriations and Allocations from the General Fund and Other Funds for the Expenditures of State Government and to Change Certain Provisions of the Law Necessary to the Proper Operations of State Government for the Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2023

**Joint Standing Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs
Joint Standing Committee on Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry**

January 24, 2023

Senators Rotundo and Ingwersen, Representatives Sachs and Pluecker, and Distinguished Members of the Joint Standing Committees on Appropriations and Financial Affairs and Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry:

My name is Bill Norbert. I am the Governmental Affairs and Communications Manager at the Finance Authority of Maine (FAME). I live in Brunswick and am here to testify in support of the Governor's proposed initiative related to the **Dairy Improvement Fund**, which is found on **page A - 22** of your materials.

The initiative adjusts funding to bring allocations derived from dedicated casino revenue in line with projected available resources for FY 22-23 in the amount of \$41,865. FAME administers this fund on behalf of the Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry.

The Dairy Improvement Fund Program was created in 2011 by the Maine Legislature to help Maine farms and dairy enterprises fund capital improvements to maintain and enhance the viability of their operations. Generally, any business or individual located in Maine and identified by the Department as engaged in commercial production of cow milk or cow milk products is eligible. Eligible uses include design, construction or improvement of milking parlors, dairy cattle housing, silos, grain bins, feed sheds, or the construction or renovation of buildings or equipment located in Maine and used in connection with a dairy enterprise. The program offers a 1% fixed interest rate on loans up to \$250,000.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I would be happy to answer any questions.