

Betsy Garrold
Knox
LD 1111

Greetings Senator Lawrence, Representative Ziegler and EUT Committee Members, My name is Betsy Garrold, I live in Knox, ME and I am testifying in support of LD 1111 "An Act Concerning Contracts and Agreement for Large-Scale Water Extraction".

As President of the Board of Directors for Food for Maine's Future I have worked for years attempting to get control of the Maine food system back into the hands of the people who are in the best position to know what their communities need and want. This work supports the eaters in each community and the small farmers trying to make a living feeding their neighbors.

In 2017 when the Local Food Sovereignty Act was passed here in the legislature we had initially included water sovereignty in the bill. In the first hearing on that bill in front of the State and Local Government committee the room was full. Full of citizens of Maine asking that we stop being a resource colony for out of state interests in the area of food and water. And full of lawyers in expensive suits. I have since that day often told the tale of the lawyers from Nestle who were there wearing suits that cost more than my first home here in Maine. It was an example of the money that is sloshing around in the "water market" in Maine. Unfortunately we were forced to remove the water clause from our bill. It was just too much to expect a small band of volunteer activists to go up against that kind of moneyed interest.

Since that time the big water bottling companies have continued to stick more "straws" into our western Maine aquifers and siphon off the lifeblood of our groundwater. Farmers in the area continue to have their wells go dry in August because of this depletion of the aquifer. Growing food requires water. This egregious, greedy, water grab needs to stop.

Now, six years later, we have the opportunity with LD 1111 to give the control of the life-giving water back to the people of Maine where it belongs. Let the local watershed communities decide whether or not to allow the extraction of this sacred communal resource. Listen to the voice of the people and vote Ought to Pass on LD 1111.

Thank you for your time.