

Larry Dansinger
Bangor
LD 1274

April 3, 2023

To members of the Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry Committee,

I am writing in support of LD 1274, “An Act to Increase Land Access for Historically Disadvantaged Populations,” also known as the “Black Farmer Restoration Program Act.”

Those who have experienced discrimination in the past, such as Black people, do not have a level playing field in which to compete socially, financially, and economically. Racism continues to this day. The only way to give Black people a level playing field in which to compete is to offer certain benefits to them that balance out an otherwise unfair situation.

The Black Farmer Restoration Program is one such benefit, allowing those who have experienced discrimination, whether overt or covert, to obtain benefits they otherwise would be denied because of past/continued discrimination. This program will cost taxpayers little money. It will provide a vehicle, sanctioned by the state of Maine, for Black farmers to utilize in overcoming this past discrimination and allow them to compete on a more level playing field that most other Maine people already have.

This program will be a symbolic statement by the state of Maine government that racism against Black people was and still is wrong and that the state, in one tangible way, is trying to undo some of the harm that was done in the past and continues in the present and, unfortunately, in the future.

The number of Black people who were born in Maine and want to farm is small. But, it is the least we can do to right past wrongs caused by racism. Please support LD 1274 to help a few of those who have experienced discrimination and financial hardship in the past to have the opportunity to live and work as Maine farmers.

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