

Helen Poertner  
Bar Harbor  
LD 1823

Senator Ingwersen, Representative Pluecker, and honorable members of the Joint Standing Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry, my name is Helen Poertner, I live in Bar Harbor, Maine, and I am here today to testify in favor of LD 1823.

I am a farmer and student about to finish my undergraduate degree in food systems. In the course of my studies, I have focused on principles of food sovereignty and resilient, decentralized food systems. I see this bill as a real opportunity to take action on what was passed in the Amendment to Establish a Right to Food and am grateful to see this proposal in the legislature.

The climate crisis is caused by corporate greed and focusing on big corporations to feed us in the future will not work. The most resilient food systems are local ones that build on interpersonal relationships and are made up of a large number of small producers. I think it is of critical importance that these relationships and practices, that luckily already exist in many parts of Maine, are legally protected. Following the principles of food and seed sovereignty that prioritize all people, from growers to consumers, over corporations will lead to a much more resilient food system in the face of climate change.

I further especially appreciate the proposed points regarding edible landscaping and programming in public schools. I believe that it is critical for young people to learn where and how their food grows to become active, critical members of shaping our food system in the future. Creating pathways for edible landscaping especially in public spaces not only provides food for people who do not have enough to eat but also brings the possibility of learning that food can be grown in many small, decentralized places and that everyone in Maine can have a stake in the food system.

Members of the Committee On Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry, I urge you to support LD 1823, An Act to Respect and Protect the Right to Food.

Thank you.