

Eliot Van Peski
Swanville
LD 1823

My name is Eliot Van Peski and I am a resident of Swanville, Maine. I am asking for your vote in favor of LD 1823, An Act to Respect and Protect the Right to Food. This bill has many different positive elements but what I would like to emphasize today is the importance of increasing legal protections on local food commerce. I am 24 years old and have chosen a career in small-scale farming. I see every day the harms done by our current system of food commerce regulation, which was designed mostly for medium-to-large-scale business, and I believe furthering the principles of food sovereignty will foster greater strength and resilience in all our communities, most especially rural ones.

In 2021, the voters of Maine amended our state constitution to explicitly protect our right to acquire (by any means, including purchase) the food of our choosing. At some point, we will have to acknowledge in law that prohibiting a person from selling food to their neighbors often makes that food unavailable and therefore infringes upon those neighbors' right to acquire it. LD 1823 may not go all the way in this regard but it is a step in the right direction.

Please vote "ought to pass" on LD 1823. Thank you for listening, and have a great day. -Eliot