Autumn Hill thomaston LD 1823

Senator Ingwersen, Representative Pluecker, and honorable members of the Joint Standing Committee on Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry, my name is Autumn Hill, I am a youth from Thomaston and I am testifying in favor of LD 1823.

As I understand the bill, it was passed last year to support local agriculture in Maine, hopefully allowing smaller farmers to thrive without being dominated by larger corporations. LD 1823 is a bill that will operationalize this constitutional amendment to reflect the wishes of Maine's farmers and make the support to local agriculture more concrete.

Maine's agriculture business is a core pillar of our state's well-being- if we refuse them the right to grow, harvest and consume their own food, are we truly supporting our farmers? It will also support Mainers who want to grow some of their own food and sell small amounts of it but do not have the funding for additional licenses or industrial kitchens. We cannot export food from outside regions forever, especially as climate change makes industrial farms less reliable. Therefore we must give our farmers the right to food sovereignty today so Maine's future generations have a better tomorrow.

Throughout my poem, I explore how powerless many farmers, and citizens feel about this legislation that affects their livelihoods- sometimes it seems that those in power ignore our pleas in favor of larger corporations. This poem is related to LD 1823 because it advocates for climate/agricultural action when it seems that no one is listening. I hope the poem will inspire change within those in power, because many youth feel far from enacting change which makes those who have that capability feel so, so far away.

Paper straw, What do you do? You distract us from The people who neglect us Because we know That there is nothing we can do But discuss, ride the bus, Plead to the higher-ups But deep down we know As the paper straw dissolves in our cup That it isn't up to us It isn't us, who must change ways All we can do is pray and pray And pray

And pray

And pray

That maybe someday Those who ride their jets Who drive their yachts Who sip on their wine Made of our futures tears Will combine and discuss our future Or will they sit in denial Passing the time pouring oil in our seas For nothing but impermanent please As they spread the disease That raises our degrees? Paper straw, What do you do?