



**Written Testimony by William Norbert  
Governmental Affairs and Communications Manager**

**In Support of “Change Package” to L.D. 258**

*An Act Making Unified Appropriations and Allocations for the Expenditures of State Government, General Fund and Other Funds, and Changing Certain Provisions of the Law Necessary to the Proper Operations of State Government for the Fiscal Years Ending June 30, 2023, June 30, 2024 and June 30, 2025*

**Joint Standing Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs  
Joint Standing Committee on Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry**

**May 16, 2023**

Senators Rotundo and Ingwersen, Representatives Sachs and Pluecker, and Distinguished Members of the Joint Standing Committees on Appropriations and Financial Affairs and Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry:

My name is Bill Norbert. I am the Governmental Affairs and Communications Manager at the Finance Authority of Maine (FAME) and submit this written testimony in support of the Governor’s proposed initiative contained in the “change package” to L.D. 258 related to the **Dairy Improvement Fund**, which is found on **Page 45** of your materials. FAME administers this fund on behalf of the Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry.

As you may recall, LD 258 originally proposed an initiative adjusting funding to the fund to bring allocations in line with projected available resources for Fiscal Year 2023-24 and Fiscal Year 2024-25. It reflected an increase of \$42,788 in FY 23-24 and \$43,883 in FY 24-25 from casino revenues. The Governor’s “change package” initiative on Page 45 now amends the prior initiative to update program allocations to align with projected revenues reflected in the May 2023 Revenue Forecasting Committee report. These new allocations are \$65,292 for FY 23-24 and \$71,048 for FY 24-25. We support these adjustments and hope you will, too.

The Dairy Improvement Fund Program was created in 2011 by the Maine Legislature to help farms and dairy enterprises fund capital improvements to maintain and enhance the viability of their operations. Generally, any business or individual located in Maine and identified by the Department as engaged in commercial production of cow milk or cow milk products is eligible. Eligible uses include design, construction or improvement of milking parlors, dairy cattle housing, silos, grain bins, feed sheds, or the construction or renovation of buildings, or

equipment, located in Maine and used in connection with a dairy enterprise. The program offers a 1% fixed interest rate on loans up to \$250,000.

Thank you for your consideration of my testimony. I would be happy to make myself available at a future work session.