

Maine Législature  
Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry

Suzanne Dunham  
29 Dunham Rd.  
Greenwood, ME 04255  
May 10, 2023

**Attn: Maggie Hood**

**RE: Testimony for LD 1823**

I am writing to express my support for LD 1823.

In 2016 I began the process of bringing the Local Food and Community Self Governance Ordinance (LFCSGO) to my town of Greenwood at the annual town meeting in 2017. The more I read about the Ordinance and the many success stories from towns that had instituted the Ordinance, the more I knew this would be a positive step for my town.

My husband and I operate a dedicated gluten-free licensed commercial kitchen and we are maple producers. We also co-manage the Greenwood Farmers' Market.

The process took about a year, including bringing the proposal to a public hearing, and finally to the citizens of the town of Greenwood. The LFSGO was passed unanimously at the 2017 annual town meeting.

In great part, the Ordinance has been extremely helpful and empowering for us since we are a rural area with few major employers. Our ski season is the primary business in these western foothills. By implementing the LFCSGO many people are now able to bring in an income that they otherwise may not be able to accomplish. It is not unusual for our community members to cobble jobs together to make ends meet.

The Ordinance has been in place here for 6 years; it has been very successful. The two testimonials in the attached were part of the proposal to implement the LFCSGO in Greenwood. They were vendors at the Greenwood Farmers' Market. Today, Greenwood Bean has dramatically increased business, purchased more/new coffee roasting equipment and continues to thrive as a small business in western Maine. Amy Wight Chapman now works at the Bethel Historical Society and is board president of the Bethel Library, which meant she had to give up the baking business. Both scenarios outline the benefits of local food sovereignty.

Thank you.

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## **Testimonials from Greenwood Farmers' Market vendors**

Michelle Shutty, Greenwood Bean

“Without the Greenwood Food Sovereignty ordinance, my small coffee roasting business may have never gotten off the ground. The ordinance gave me a chance to quickly and easily introduce my product to customers in my community at the local farmers' market, and allowed me to determine that there was enough demand and interest to warrant starting the business, before putting forth the effort of getting licensed. I have since become licensed as a home processor and mobile vendor, but probably wouldn't have made that leap without the ordinance.”

Amy-Wight Chapman, Amy's Bakehouse

“I had a commercial kitchen license and a second kitchen dedicated to the bakery when I ran it out of my home. I gave it up because I was putting in too many hours for too little pay and I needed a job with regular pay and health insurance. However, the licensing regulations were definitely a deterrent to doing any baking part-time on the side while working at other jobs. After I closed the bakery, I often had people ask me if I would bake something for them, and had to tell them no, because I no longer had a license.

Having the ability to bake in my home kitchen and sell products directly to customers without going through the licensing process has made it possible for me to bake and sell at the weekly Greenwood Farmers' Market. Without our town's food sovereignty ordinance, I wouldn't be participating in the market.

I love the flexibility of the Greenwood Farmers' Market, which makes it possible for me to participate when I am able, and to take a week or more off if I have other commitments. I also love the fact that it is right across the street from my house. It's been wonderful getting to know the other vendors, and I always go home from the market with high-quality local products I've purchased from several other vendors. And I love meeting my customers and building up a "fan club" for my baked goods!”