



MERRYMEETING
FOOD COUNCIL

Testimony of Jamison Pacheco of Bath, ME before the 131st Legislature’s Joint Standing Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry

Good afternoon members of the Joint Standing Committee on Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry.

My name is Jamison Pacheco, I am a resident of Bath, Maine and I am here today to express my support of LD 2093 - An Act to Address Food Insecurity by Helping Maine Residents Access Locally Produced Food. I am a volunteer with the farmers market SNAP program in Bath, in my professional work I have supported three other markets in the greater Brunswick area in implementing or improving their SNAP programs, and work for an organization that operates one of Maine’s largest farmers markets.

I have been involved with SNAP programs at farmers markets for 5 years and have seen the programs grow year over year. In the last year, while funding for the SNAP match program has decreased, I have seen a significant decrease in the number of families that use the program. This means that families do not have the same access to fresh, healthy and local food that they have had in the past.

Alongside this, fewer dollars allocated for food access support have gone into our local food system. This weakens our local food system; withdraws support from the food producers we call neighbors, that reinvest in our communities and produce food in climate healthy ways; and weakens the connections between people in a community as the opportunity to “know your grower” is removed.

Please give this bill your full support so that we may continue to invest in the people we call neighbors, whether they be those that need support accessing healthy foods or those that produce healthy foods.

Regards,

Jamison Pacheco