

February 28th 2023
Jim Buckle Unity, Maine
LD2212

Good morning Senator Ingwersen, Representative Pluecker and members of the joint Standing Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry. My name is Jim Buckle, co-owner of The Buckle Farm in Unity, Maine. We are a certified organic fruit and vegetable farm that sells to wholesale markets in Maine. I am writing you in support LD 2212, An Act to Strengthen Maine's Agriculture, Food System and Forest Products Infrastructure Investment.

My support comes with two suggestions as the committee considers the bill. Manufacturing and processing of agricultural, woods and water products are of great value to both the producers and consumers of the state of Maine. These industries drive a significant portion of our economy and are the backbone of rural life in the state. Our communities enjoy these products to feed, clothe and house ourselves with sustainable, locally produced goods by their neighbors and friends.

1. Please consider changing and/or clarifying the limitations of the recipients of the funds to only people who currently have these facilities and include start-up of these facilities by the producers. Additionally consider clarifying that a farmer, logger or fisherman are people who process and manufacture their goods. Each of us harvest the raw materials, add value to them and prepare them for the market. By doing this the committee would have the latitude to be able to fund projects by the raw material producers. Projects could include, for example, harvest and planting equipment on a farm, sawmills and wood processors for loggers or equipment needed by fishermen to harvest or prepare ocean products for market.
2. I feel strongly that recipients of these funds should only be accessible by State of Maine residents or who's companies are owned in whole by residents of Maine.

I feel this is an incredible opportunity for producers in Maine to continue and supply the residents with healthy local and sustainable everyday products. Thank you for considering these two suggestions and continued support of these industries

Jim Buckle