

# ROCK MAPLE FARM, SEDGWICK, MAINE

## Testimony in Support of LD 2256

### **An Act to Provide Emergency One-time Relief from the Wild Blueberry Tax for Growers in Maine**

Senator Ingwersen, Representative Pluecker, and esteemed members of the Committee on Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry... my name is John Fassak and I own and operate Rock Maple Farm in Sedgwick on the Blue Hill Peninsula.

I am writing in support of your proposed Act to provide emergency, one-time relief from the wild blueberry tax for growers in Maine.

We are a family operation, farming 8 acres of wild blueberries, and managing 100 acres of surrounding woodlands for lumber, wildlife habitat preservation, and water quality conservation. The land we now own has been in farming for over 200 years, originally settled by the Friend family, one of the original settlers of Sedgwick.

Financially, we have been incurring losses over the past 4 years, given the biennial nature of wild blueberry harvests, rising fuel and fertilizer costs, increasing regulation and cost of labor for harvesting, our small scale, and Canadian subsidies for growing, processing, and developing new technologies for Canadian wild blueberries.

We love our land and farming and what farming does for Maine and our farming communities. Our ambition is to be able to pass down our land, a profitable farming operation, and the open spaces and vistas of the blueberry barrens to our children and grandchildren. And sustain our contribution to and role in Maine's \$361 million in annual sales wild blueberry industry.

This is becoming an increasingly difficult ambition to fulfill...and the tax relief will allow us to reinvest these savings in our operation.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I ask that you vote in support for LD 2256.

John Fassak