



Testimony to the Joint Committee on Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry

LD 113 – An Act to Require Food Labels to Disclose Use of Messenger Ribonucleic Acid Vaccine Material in Food Production

February 6, 2025

Northe Saunders

Co-Director, Maine Families for Vaccines

Good Morning, Chair Talbot Ross and Chair Plueker, and Honorable members of the Committee:

My name is Northe Saunders, and I am the Co-Director of Maine Families for Vaccines, an organization dedicated to fighting misinformation and protecting public health through science-based policy. I am here today to speak in opposition to LD 93, which would require special labeling for food products derived from animals that have received messenger RNA (mRNA) vaccines.

While transparency in food production is important, this bill is rooted in misinformation rather than science. It risks undermining confidence in vaccines at a time when public trust in immunization is already under attack.

There is no scientific basis for concerns that mRNA vaccines in livestock could pose a risk to human health. mRNA is a naturally occurring molecule that breaks down rapidly after fulfilling its purpose and does not remain in the body.

Additionally, mRNA from vaccines is not present in the food supply. All vaccines used in livestock must meet strict USDA safety standards, including withdrawal periods, to ensure that no residual vaccine components remain in meat or dairy products. We should not legislate regulation where none is necessary.

Maine Families for Vaccines is committed to countering disinformation that threatens both human and animal health. LD 93 is part of a larger wave of misinformation-driven efforts to cast doubt on vaccines, mirroring false claims that have fueled declining childhood immunization rates and a resurgence of vaccine-preventable diseases like measles and whooping cough.

Maine has been a national leader in standing up to vaccine misinformation. In 2019, our state passed PL 154, a law strengthening Maine's childhood vaccine requirements. When it was challenged at the ballot box, Mainers overwhelmingly upheld it with a 73% majority, the strongest pro-vaccine vote in U.S. history. Since then, Maine has become a model for defending public health and resisting the influence of disinformation. The passage of PL 154 struck a major blow against vaccine misinformation, making clear that Mainers believe in science and won't be manipulated by fear tactics and falsehoods.

LD 93 threatens to undo that progress by giving legitimacy to anti-vaccine conspiracy theories and setting a dangerous precedent where pseudoscience dictates policy. If Maine chooses to single out mRNA vaccines for special labeling, despite no scientific evidence of harm, what's next? Laws restricting childhood vaccines based on the same kind of misinformation?

mRNA vaccines are a major advancement in disease prevention. In human health, they have saved millions of lives during the COVID-19 pandemic. In animal health, they have the potential to prevent devastating livestock diseases, reduce reliance on antibiotics, and protect our food supply. Do we need a burdensome regulation put on Maine farmers and ranchers based on misinformation?

Public health decisions must be guided by science—not fear, not misinformation, and not political pressure. Maine must not be part of a movement that weaponizes misinformation to undermine vaccines.

At a time when vaccine misinformation is being broadcast from the highest levels of government, Maine has a choice: stand with science or fuel the spread of falsehoods that harm public health. LD 93 is scientifically unnecessary, adds no safety benefit, and risks undermining confidence in vaccines overall.

Maine families have spoken before, and we won't go back. For these reasons, I strongly urge the committee to vote Ought Not to Pass on LD 93.

Thank you, and I am happy to answer any questions.

Northe Saunders
Maine Families For Vaccines
Info@mainefamiliesforvaccines.com