

Maine Dairy Industry Association
PO Box 5013 | 337 State Street
Augusta, ME 04430



Annie Watson, President
Dale Cole, Vice President
Jason Tessier, Secretary
Heath Miller, Treasurer
Dick Perkins, At Large

TESTIMONY BEFORE THE JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

in support of

“LD195 An Act To Create a Small Business Capital Savings Account Program

Good afternoon Senator Curry, Representative Gere, and members of Joint Standing Committee On Housing and Economic Development, my name is Heath Miller and I, along with Annie Watson represent Maine Dairy Industry Association. (MDIA)

MDIA represents the 138 cow-dairy farms in the state shipping milk. Our farms are located in 15 of Maine’s 16 counties. MDIA represents all of Maine’s dairies, no matter the size or style of operation. It is on behalf of these farms that we would like to submit this testimony in support of LD195.

As many of you know, the dairy industry in Maine struggles to compete with other regions in the US, including here in New England. Over the last several years our cost of production has been much higher than revenue received. Historically, some of our farms have seen a profitable year once every five years. This means an inability to reinvest in our farms in four out of these five years. This bill would give our farms, in a rare year where they have some profit, the ability to save that profit in a capital saving account to be used for future investment in the farm’s infrastructure.

A profit on Maine dairy farms is not something expected when preparing end of year financial reports. When, or if, this happens, it generally comes as a surprise to the farm owners. Although most farms have a long list of potential investments, time will not allow for meaningful capital investment before books close.

This bill would allow farms to put any profit in savings to be spent, after careful, thoughtful planning has been done, allowing for meaningful capital investment. Investing and updating infrastructure is one of the keys to improving a farm’s sustainability, and any opportunity to support reinvestment on our farms is one worth pursuing.

Thank you for your time and consideration, and please reach out with any questions.