



February 27th, 2025

Senator Nangle
Representative Crafts
Members of the Committee on Transportation

RE: Opposition as written to LD 232, An Act to Impose a Vehicle Weight Limit on Route 46 in the Town of Eddington

My name is Eric Venturini, and I am the Executive Director of the Wild Blueberry Commission of Maine.

The Wild Blueberry Commission (WBCM) works on behalf of Maine's 512¹ farms who grow Maine's iconic wild blueberries on 47,600¹ acres across the State. Our industry contributes \$361 million dollars to the state's economy annually² and is the only state with significant commercial production of wild blueberries.

Maine's wild blueberry producers grow, pack, and ship, up to 100 million pounds of wild blueberries annually. Most production is in Washington and Hancock County and Route 46 is the most direct route to the highway, currently, for a few of my larger suppliers. A fully loaded tractor trailer truck with frozen wild blueberries carries about 40,000 pounds of wild blueberries, in addition to the weight of the truck.

After speaking with the sponsor, Representative Campbell a few weeks ago, I understand that the intent of this bill is to limit heavy truck traffic on Route 46 because an I-395 extension is under construction. My producers are excited about the extension and expect that it will reduce their transportation time and associated costs. I thank Representative Campbell for his work on trying to secure funding for this extension over the years and congratulate him on this success.

Overall, we have no issue with this bill – unless the restriction will be in affect at a time when the I-395 extension is either not yet complete or the extension is temporary closed due to an accident, road construction, or similar situation.

I simply ask that the committee consider adding language to the bill that would allow truck traffic on the restricted portion of Route 46 only during periods when the I-395 extension is closed to truck traffic.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak on this matter. I would be happy to try and answer any questions that you may have.

¹ USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service. 2022. Berries: 2022. United States Census of Agriculture.

² Camoine Associates. Unpublished Data. Economic and Fiscal Impacts of the Maine Wild Blueberry Industry. Wild Blueberry Association of North America – US, October 2023.





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