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March 6, 2025

Testimony of Representative Holly Eaton

LD 415: An Act to Support Hunger Prevention in Maine

Submitted to the Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry Committee

Senator Rachel Talbot Ross and Representative Bill Pluecker, distinguished members of the Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry Committee, my name is Holly Eaton, and I am honored to represent House District 15, which includes the island and coastal communities of Penobscot Bay. I am submitting testimony in strong support of **LD 415**, An Act to Support Hunger Prevention in Maine.

As a parent, I understand firsthand the challenges families face in ensuring their children have consistent access to nutritious food. No child should have to worry about when their next meal will come, and yet, in Maine, we know that food insecurity remains a daily reality for far too many families. My own experiences balancing the responsibilities of parenthood and public service have deepened my commitment to policies that support working families, ensure access to basic needs, and strengthen our communities.

In my work as a legislator, I have focused on issues that directly impact the well-being of my constituents—whether it's housing, coastal infrastructure, or public transportation. But at the heart of all these efforts is the fundamental belief that every Mainer deserves stability and security. Hunger is not just a symptom of poverty—it is a structural issue that affects health, education, workforce participation, and long-term community prosperity. By investing in hunger prevention services, we are investing in stronger families, healthier children, and a more resilient Maine.

My district, home to hardworking fishermen, small business owners, and families that have lived on these islands for generations, is not immune to the challenges of food insecurity. With the rising costs of living, families in rural and coastal areas often find themselves stretched thin,

District 15: Brooklin, Deer Isle, Eagle Island Township, Frenchboro, Southwest Harbor, Stonington, Swan's Island, Tremont, Isle au Haut, Vinalhaven

facing difficult choices between rent, utilities, and groceries. The funding proposed in LD 415 will help ensure that the nonprofit organizations working tirelessly to provide hunger relief have the resources they need to reach the most vulnerable members of our communities.

Maine has made great strides in addressing hunger, but we cannot afford to step back now. The additional \$1,000,000 per year proposed in this bill is a necessary investment in our state's future, ensuring that our hunger relief infrastructure remains strong and effective. This is not just about charity—it is about policy that acknowledges the real struggles families face and provides tangible support to alleviate them.

I urge the committee to support LD 415 and help us take another step forward in ensuring that no Mainer goes hungry. Thank you for your time.

I appreciate the committee's consideration of this important bill and respectfully urge you to support LD 415 to ensure that no Mainer faces food insecurity. Thank you for your time and consideration.